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Edited by DOUGLAS JERROLD

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APRIL COMMENTARY

ARE the bye-election results good, or bad, or insignificant? Naturally enough, a series of bye-elections, all lost, produces a reaction in the Conservative Party. You cannot hope to win a bye-election unless you appear to start out with high hopes and succeed in communicating these hopes to the party workers in the constituency. The more skilful your propaganda, the more enthusiastic your constituency workers, the more efficient your central organization, the greater the reaction in the event of defeat. Yet the realist must admit that, if we had proportional representation, or, indeed, any of its variants, the recent bye-election results show a turnover of votes quite sufficient to ensure that there would be no working majority for socialism after the general election. As things are, they indicate the bare possibility that the socialists will come back with their majority virtually intact and the actual probability that they will come back with a much smaller, but still working, majority.

Inevitably, there have been many explanations proffered, most of them concerned with the alleged lack of a "Conservative Policy". It is fairly clear, however, that any diagnosis which rests on the belief that a new statement of policy is likely to have any early influence on the electorate ignores the root cause of the trouble, which is the confusion deliberately created by our opponents between the "welfare" or "social-service" state, as created by a succession of Conservative and National administrations, and the socialist state which fortunately still remains an unrealized project. By identifying socialism with the national health service, with "work or maintenance", with social security, with family allowances, and with universal free secondary education, the Socialist Party has done two very clever things. It has secured for itself, with hardly a protest from the Conservatives, all the credit for every positive achievement of the Conservative Party during the last twenty years, and at the same time, seeing that the Conservatives are going up and down the country attacking Socialism and the Socialists, it has persuaded the public that the Conservatives are opposed to the concept of the welfare state which in hard fact the Conservatives created.

THIS fundamental confusion in the public mind is due largely to very astute Socialist propaganda, worked out steadily over a long period of years. The now greatly improved propaganda of the Conservative Party began to take effective shape ten years too late. Nevertheless, the Socialists could never have been so brilliantly successful for so long but for serious shortcomings on our own side. We speak with far too many voices on too wide a variety of subjects. We have quite failed to define, and therefore, to get across to the public, our real case against the Socialist Party which is, of course, that socialism must inevitably, and in the very short run, undermine and ultimately destroy the economic basis alike of the social services and of the Conservative policy of full employment. Instead, we have allowed the valuable concept of a property-owning democracy to be regarded, and, indeed, sometimes actually talked of by Conservatives, as if it were an alternative to, and not an extension of, the social services as they exist to-day. Since we have never defined the property-owning democracy, we are widely accused of being opposed to the social services and of having nothing at all concrete to put in their place.

THE resolution carried at the March meeting of the Conservative Central Council was no doubt intended to remove this misunderstanding, but there is small hope that it will do so. The truth has got to be made plain in every constituency, from the opposition benches in Parliament, in the Press and on the platform in the same terms, and with the same order of priority, over many months. It is right and necessary, of course, that we should make plain our attitude to defence, Empire development and Commonwealth relations; and on the vast and complex problems of the middle and far East, of Germany and of Western Union. And it is also true that people will listen to us very readily on these matters, but they will not vote for us, if only because they feel that, in regard to those matters, this country, like the United States, has really got a bi-partisan policy. It is mainly for this reason, and not because the electorate are interested only in their own pockets, that domestic issues will determine the election results.

ANOTHER main issue which is sadly mishandled to-day is Communism. Do we regard the Socialist party as our allies against Communism in this country, or do we regard them as potential Quislings liable to compromise with Communism, if and when such a course appears likely to offer electoral advantages. Clearly, neither view is tenable. We have to develop the case not against the Socialist party but against Socialism, if we are to clarify this issue. You cannot establish the police state in a democracy, when the executive is responsible to a freely elected Parliament, *so long as the electorate through its representatives is still in a position effectively to withhold supply. The moment, however, that all the means of production, distribution and exchange have passed*

out of the hands of the electorate into the hands of the State, the executive is irremovable because it no longer needs parliamentary support to maintain itself in power. Parliament, in such circumstances, will be no less and no more able to influence the policy of the government than was Hitler's Reichstag, than is Mr. Stalin's Supreme Soviet. There is, fortunately, no evidence that the leaders of the Socialist party are in favour of socialism in practice. The danger to our liberties remains, however, as long as they continue to give lip service to the Marxist doctrine. The time will inevitably come when they will be forced to put their perorations into practice. If it is true, as they pretend, that the nationalization of the means of production, distribution and exchange provides the key to a new world of unlimited wealth and opportunity combined with security, then the electorate, repeatedly informed of the fact, must one day turn round and ask for the key to be used, for the door to be unlocked. We cannot too clearly realize, or too often say, that between the full application of the Socialist formula and the establishment of the Communist state there is no difference whatever. Further, it is historically quite unreasonable to assume that a British Communist state would differ fundamentally from a Russian or a German Communist state. Once the means of production, distribution and exchange have passed out of the possession of the voters into the possession of a centralized executive, the executive become independent of the popular suffrage and irremovable except by its own choice. Political and economic liberty, in such an event, will have perished, and the consequence in the long, or the short, run, will be tyranny. It is profoundly unhistorical to regard any of the great tyrannies of history, including those set up in our own time, as the accidental creations of individual statesmen who happened by ill-luck to be personally men of evil character. Wherever you get an excessive centralization of power you get a condition where tyranny is the only alternative to anarchy. The consequences of a breakdown of Government in an omni-competent state are too catastrophic to be faced. Once such a state is set up, it must go on to the end, knowing that if it collapses, it will bring everything down in ruins with it. Such a state first arms itself with all the weapons of tyranny, then, as fear grips it, it begins to employ them, first with restraint, and then, as the fear deepens, with reckless ferocity. The end is inevitably the same, because the human mind has been stretched beyond its capacity.

THE gravest risk in the world to-day is that fear may come to dominate the policies of the Kremlin. It will require state-craft of an unusually high order if the Western powers are to find the proper mean course between two disastrous extremes. If they do too little and too late in the way of defence, they will offer a temptation to Russia which may be irresistible. If, on the other hand, Russia becomes (however wrongly), convinced that the Western powers are bent on aggression, or a preventive war, then she will be driven by fear into some action so hostile and challenging that war will come.

The Atlantic Pact expresses clearly enough the realization of these two dangers by all the Western powers. It is an instrument which cannot be invoked for any aggressive purpose. Its value for effective defence will depend on the extent to which it energizes the democratic peoples of Western Europe to take effective measures in their own defence, and on the extent to which standardized equipment is made available to them for the purpose. The key to the defence of the west, in the present phase of the Cold War, lies in the presence on the Rhine of the requisite number, now usually put at eighteen to twenty, of mobilized divisions fully armed and supplied with the necessary air and mechanized transport. Such a force, with the reinforcements *immediately* available from France and the Benelux countries on mobilization, would, in a shooting war, have to hold the Rhine frontier. This is surely the most important single point on which attention must be kept focused. We hope, and we may indeed believe, that Russia has no intention of passing from her cold war strategy to a war of military aggression, but we have to be prepared for the worst if we are to expect the best, and in a shooting war there can be no retreat from the Rhine. It may well be—the technical developments of the next few months or years will be the deciding factor—that for safety we must hold a line farther east; it is already certain that the nature of modern weapons, and the political implications of any occupation of Western Europe by Russia, preclude the repetition of the strategy imposed on us by *force majeure* in both the last wars—viz. a retreat (in the one case to the edge of and in the other case across the channel), and a four years' wait until we were able to undertake a successful offensive and reconquer the territory of our allies. Modern self-propelled missiles, apart from other still secret devices, mean that with an enemy west of the Rhine England becomes useless as an intermediate base, if not actually indefensible.

THERE is one yawning gap in the Atlantic Pact and that is the omission of Spain. This is all the stranger since Spain must be of the utmost strategic importance in the event of war. The sincerity of the Spanish opposition to Communism is not in doubt, nor is her readiness to join in the defence of Western Europe in the event of aggression from the east. Until the invitation to Portugal to join the Atlantic Pact, it might have been assumed that the Spanish dislike of the parliamentary form of Government was the head and front of their offence. We must now presume that the objection taken is not to Spain but to General Franco personally. If so, it is at once foolish and unjust. In the first place, General Franco neither was, nor is, a political reactionary. He was one of the Generals who accepted the Liberal republic and would never have ceased to do so on political grounds. Like most of the leading figures on his side in the Civil War he took his stand against anarchy, religious persecution and Russian intervention in Spanish internal affairs. His dislike of Parliamentarianism in its Western form is common to the overwhelming majority of Spaniards of the right and the left. It is the belief that the restoration of the Monarchy would mean the return of that peculiarly

bitter party strife and violence which Spain associates with parliamentary government that keeps General Franco in office. In other words, it is not the Caudillo who denies Spain a Parliament, but the Spanish dislike of Parliament which keeps, and alone keeps, the Caudillo in office. So much for the folly of the personal feelings of British and French politicians towards General Franco.

The injustice of these personal feelings is a simpler matter. General Franco is associated in the public mind with the acceptance first of Italian and then of German aid in the Civil War. He had nothing to do with either policy. The decision to ask for Italian assistance to balance the help promised, and known to have been promised, by Russia to the left wing revolutionary junta, who placed Largo Caballero in office at the outbreak of the Civil War, was taken long before General Franco had any decisive say in the policy of the Spanish right. He was not the leader of the military revolt and was never intended to become the leader. When, first, General Sanjurgo and, later, General Mola were killed in aeroplane accidents, General Franco succeeded to the supreme military command and so ultimately to the political control, but he became the leader of a movement whose policy in regard to Italy and Germany was already pre-determined and could not at that date have been reversed.

INCIDENTALLY, it is worth while to put once again on record the fact that the only organized non-Spanish military formations fighting in the Spanish Civil War were the Russian air-force on the one side and the Italian expeditionary force on the other. Of volunteer formations there was the powerful International Brigade on the one side and the negligible Irish Brigade on the other. Neither the Russian nor the Italian intervention was in the least decisive. The decisive military events in the Civil War were, first, the seizure of the naval arsenals at Cadiz and Ferrol and of the mountain passes covering the roads from Madrid to Burgos and the north; secondly, the decision of the Spanish railway workers to work the railways for General Mola's army of the north; thirdly, the capture of Seville by a *coup de main* by General Queipo de Llano; fourthly, General Franco's crossing of the Straits and his march north to Toledo; fifthly, the capture of Bilbao and the defeat of the Basque separatist movement; and, finally, General Franco's drive eastwards to Barcelona. In none of these movements did the Italians have any decisive part, and in the work of the key operations they took no part at all. The Italians were given an important part to play in the first effort to capture Madrid, but that ended in their defeat at Guadalajara, the only substantial victory ever achieved by the Barcelona Government. After that the Italians were held in very poor regard by General Franco and his staff, and, beyond playing a small part in the purely diversionary campaign which led to the capture of Malaga, their record of achievement was poor in the extreme. As for the Germans, there was a substantial number of technicians of various kinds behind the lines but no fighting formations, and the technicians were not allowed in or near the line. It is desirable that these facts should be kept in mind because the most popular charge against General Franco

is that he began as the pliant tool of the Italian and German dictators. This is a plain lie. The movement in which he joined, and of which ultimately, and by pure chance, he became the leader, was a Spanish movement, made possible by the support it enjoyed in Spain and carried through to victory by Spanish troops under Spanish command. Men of goodwill will continue to differ as to whether the rebellion was initially justified, but there is no excuse for misunderstanding its nature or the character of the forces which sustained it, nor is it permissible to doubt that the very brave men who led it did so with a clear conscience and for what, to them, was a necessary and a noble cause.

AS a pendant to the recent correspondence in *The Times* on Conservative policy it is interesting to reflect that if the Socialist party were to be so foolish as to fight an election on the Socialist issue, asking for a mandate for a radically Marxist programme, the coalition of anti-Socialists would be easily victorious, but there is every evidence that the Government are moving with more speed than logic in the precisely opposite direction. Every day they proudly announce the removal or the loosening of restrictions on free enterprise, and no day passes without a tribute from the Government front bench to the immense achievements of British industry in closing the gap between imports and exports. The truth, of course, is that the differences over policy among the Socialists are far, far greater than among the Conservatives, but the law which governs all Coalitions is working in the Socialists' favour to-day. Coalitions grow more and more homogeneous the longer they are in office, and less and less so the longer they are in opposition.

This is particularly true to-day because the policies fought for by the more progressive wing of the Tory party, imperial preference, the restoration of British agriculture, a protective tariff and a vigorous policy of social reform, have not been defeated but have, on the contrary, been put into practice and form the essential basis and bastion of the present Government's policy. When it is added that the Socialists have also adopted conscription and are busy on a great re-armament scheme, we are justified in saying that there is literally nothing against which they spoke and voted in the 1930's which to-day they do not accept. It is this fact above all which gives to the Conservative opposition an appearance of ineffectiveness, due, in reality, to the fact that almost the whole of their policies for which they vainly strove from 1906 to 1923 have now been carried through and have proved so brilliantly successful that the Socialists have adopted them wholesale.

DOUGLAS JERROLD.

THE COMING LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

BY CUTHBERT HEADLAM*

LOCAL Government elections usually arouse little or no interest among the general public, and, as a rule, only a small proportion of the electors take the trouble to go to the polls. This is all the more surprising because for ratepayers the election of capable and provident councillors, who can be depended upon for efficient and economic administration, is a matter of supreme importance. It is to be hoped that in the coming local elections, there will be far less apathy than usually prevails among Conservatives and that all those who value local Government will record their votes.

The special importance of the coming elections is that the present form of local Government in this country, which dates from the establishment of County Councils by the Local Government Act, 1888, has now become a matter of considerable controversy, and there is a real danger that, unless it is remodelled, it may be superseded by some new form of centralized administration, which would no longer be *local* Government as we understand it to-day. There may be some truth in the criticism directed against the existing system of local administration, but, whatever its faults may be, it is entrusted to, and carried out by, local councillors who are elected by their neighbours and the great majority of whom are well aware of the needs of their constituents and are anxious to do the best they can for the areas which they represent. A completely centralized administration of local Government might be more efficient, but its establishment would be yet another victory for the bureaucrats and the planners—"centralization is the death blow of freedom."

The difficulties against which the local authorities are now contending are largely due to the mass of administrative work which has been thrust upon them by Parliament during the last thirty years. By 1918 the County Councils, Rural District Councils, Urban District Councils and Municipal Councils had been established throughout the country in what is known as the "two-tier" system of local Government, whilst a few of the largest cities were left in complete control of their affairs. To these authorities were given the functions until then performed by the School Boards, Boards of Health, Boards of Guardians, etc. Subsequently, as a result of the social legislation, of which there has been such a spate since the end of the first World War, the work of local authorities has been increased, whilst at the same time much of their administrative independence has been taken from them. It is this latter change in procedure which is causing so much anxiety to those who are concerned with the retention of a genuine system of local Government as an integral part of our democratic constitutional machinery. In the early days of local Government there was but little interference from Whitehall except in matters of finance. The Central Government controlled the capital expenditure of the local authorities, audited their accounts and investigated any corrupt practices alleged to have been committed by them, but otherwise the authorities were allowed to manage their own affairs.

THE increase in expenditure, however, necessitated by the expansion of the social services since 1918 compelled the Central Government to share in the costs of administration as the rates, although they rose continuously throughout this period, were in many parts of the country hardly

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** Sir Cuthbert Headlam is Conservative M.P. for North Newcastle.*

sufficient to meet the ordinary local needs.

Less than sixty years ago, the cost of the local authorities in England and Wales for all purposes, i.e., ordinary services, trading services and capital expenditure was under £55 millions a year; in 1944-45 it had risen to £729 millions. During this same period, the expenditure on ordinary local Government services rose from £35 millions to £521 millions, towards which huge sum the taxpayer contributed almost as much as the ratepayer. Between 1914 and 1948 rates rose from £71 millions to approximately £278 millions.

In Scotland, the total expenditure of the local authorities (on ordinary and capital accounts) for all purposes rose from £22 millions in 1913-14 to £90 millions in 1944-45, while the expenditure for ordinary local Government services increased from £19 millions in 1913-14 to £87 millions in 1944-45.

In England and Wales, the burden of rates per head has risen from £1 18s. 11d. in 1914-15 to £6 3s. 1d. in 1947-48: in Scotland from £1 15s. 8d. in 1914-15 to £6 4s. 10d. in 1947-48.

THE passing of the Local Government Act, 1929, by which industrial properties are excused payment of 75 per cent of the rates and agricultural land is excused all rates, obliged the State to make up the loss of rates by block grants from the Exchequer. These grants were not given for specific services but were designed so as to benefit the distressed areas where expenditure was abnormally high and the local resources abnormally low. The present Government by the Local Government Act, 1948, has superseded the block grant by an Exchequer equalization grant by which only local authorities whose rateable value per head is lower than the national average will qualify for State assistance.

It was only reasonable that, in services in which a uniform national standard has to be maintained, the State should shoulder the main burden of the cost. But the unfortunate result has been that with the increase of the State's contribution to local expenditure, the Government departments in London have made use of the opportunity to encroach more and more upon the administrative work of the local authorities. "He who pays the piper calls the tune." The dead hand of bureaucracy has done much to reduce the functions of the local authorities to the mere carrying out of the instructions of the various Ministries which are concerned with local Government—nor has the setting up of branches of these Ministries in some of the larger towns decentralized to any extent the powers exercised in Whitehall. It is not surprising, therefore, that energetic local councillors are beginning to lose heart, and that highly competent local officials are looking for employment elsewhere rather than have to submit to the constant intervention of Whitehall in almost every detail of their work. Such intervention is not necessary, nor is it justified by reason of the maladministration of the local authorities. A study of the work accomplished by them in the years between the two wars is sufficient to show that throughout this period, despite the economic depression, there was a steady improvement in public health; a marked decrease in maternal and infant mortality; more attention given to the nutrition of children in the schools, and a reduction in deaths from infectious diseases. Tremendous strides, too, were made in slum clearance, and new houses were built in numbers to which Mr. Bevan, naturally, does not usually allude.

THE policy of nationalization pursued by the present Socialist Government, by depriving the local authorities of their gas, electricity and transport undertakings, and hospitals, has still further reduced the administrative functions of these bodies, and has increased the process of centralization now in progress—for the various *ad hoc* boards and councils, to which the services previously managed and administered by elected local representatives, are to be composed of members to be nominated by Ministers in London. Even the valuation on which local rates are based, and for which local representatives have hitherto been responsible, will henceforward be undertaken by the Income Tax Department.

But the success or failure of genuine local Government depends not only upon the maintenance of its administration under local authorities, but also upon a readjustment of its boundaries, many of which are no longer suitable or convenient in view of the growth of the population during recent years and the changes in its distribution throughout the country. The need for changes in the boundaries of local Government was made clear in the Coalition Government's White Paper on "Local Government in England and Wales during the period of Reconstruction"* which led in 1945 to the passing of the Local Government (Boundary Commission) Act by Mr. Churchill's administration before it left office. This Act set up a Commission to review all the 1,500 local authorities in England and Wales and to issue Orders altering their status, subject in some cases to confirmation by Parliament. The Commissioners have already made a report to Parliament, published last year, in which the Commissioners, after stating that their present powers and instructions did not permit the formation of local Government units as effective and convenient as in their opinion they should be, set out a scheme of reform which, in their opinion, would provide a sound and efficient system of local Government. These proposals envisage the creation of a new type of borough and would give to all county districts an equal status. The Commissioners also advocate an increase in the number of administrative counties from forty-nine to sixty-seven of which twenty would be empowered to exercise all local Government functions directly as the county borough Councils do at the present time, while the remainder would delegate some of their functions to county districts.

THE Commissioners' scheme, which was summarized in a leading article in *The Times* as "in effect to return to the original aim of 1888, by extending a reformed County Government to the whole country, save in a handful of the largest cities, with genuinely local authorities everywhere sharing duties in varying degrees with the counties" might well prove to be a solution of the problem, although it would encounter a good deal of criticism. Unfortunately, however, party politics play an important part in the controversy and the views of Conservatives and Socialists are sharply divided in the matter of local Government. The former have until recently endeavoured to keep local Government outside party politics, whereas the latter, ever since the formation of the political Labour Party, have fought local elections on strictly party lines. In this policy—however much it may be at variance with the original conception that local Government should be conducted by the most suitable local men—they have been wise in their generation—for, as Mr. Shinwell explained in an article in *The Star*,† "There is little value in gaining national power unless, at the same time, we achieve power in local Government—the town, county and rural district Councils." This policy has also enabled the Socialist Party, in addition to utilizing local Government elections as a means of propagating the doctrines of Socialism in their entirety, to give to their more promising and intelligent supporters some practical experience in administrative work. What may be the actual policy of the present Government about the reform of local Government is not very clear. In 1944 a resolution was carried at the Socialist Party Conference advocating a policy of "regionalism" which would entail the establishment of much larger units of local administration than exist to-day and an increase of centralized control.

This policy, however, has not proved popular, even among the Socialists themselves, and from what Mr. Bevan has said in the House of Commons in answer to questions, addressed to him concerning the Government's attitude towards the recommendations of the Boundary Commission, it looks as if the Cabinet have not yet made up their minds what course to pursue about local Government reform. It would be interesting to know whether the Prime Minister is still in favour of the

* Cmd. 6578, 1945.

† See *The Star*, 30th May, 1947.

appointment of district Commissioners to rule over large areas who must be Socialists and the interpreters of the will of the Government. A Commissioner, in the Prime Minister's view, must not be impartial. "He is a Socialist, and therefore in touch with the Socialists in the region, who are his colleagues in the campaign. It may be said that this is rather like the Russian plan of Commissars and Communist Party members. I am not afraid of the comparison. We have taken the strong points of the Russian system and apply them to this country."*

THE Conservative Party, while fully recognizing the need for a readjustment of local boundaries, is opposed to "regionalism", or to any system of local Government based on still further encroachment by the Central Government upon the powers of the local authorities.

In 1948 at the Conservative and Unionist Party Conference held at Llandudno a resolution was passed condemning "the Socialist Government's policy of centralization of control and the general tendency to take away the functions of the local authorities and place them in the hands of non-elected bodies, and considers that as many powers and responsibilities as possible should be delegated by the Central Government to local authorities and by County Councils to borough and district councils".

The governing principle of the Conservative policy for local Government is that it should be *local*, and that it should be *Government*. This means that the inhabitants of a district must be in close touch with the administrative unit of local Government which looks after their well-being, and that these units must have adequate powers of independent executive action.

IN the coming local elections the Conservatives are determined to do all in their power to defeat the constantly growing efforts of the Socialists to extend the trading activities of local authorities in competition with those of individual ratepayers.

They consider, too, that the Local Government Act, 1948, has failed to solve the problem of local taxation. The rise in the rates still continues and to a large extent is due to the excessive expenditure incurred by local authorities as a result of the pressure put upon them by the Government Departments. Steps must be taken to check such pressure, and the financial relationship now existing between the Central Government and the local authorities must be carefully examined in the light of conditions since the war.

With regard to the pressing problem of house-building, the Conservatives believe that Mr. Bevan's housing programme could and should be enlarged. They are convinced that the slow progress being made in the construction of new houses, both by local authorities and by private persons, is largely due to a wasteful use of labour and to the high cost of building which it involves. This state of things can only be brought to an end—first, by greatly reducing the official interference which now goes on during the whole of the work of construction, and secondly, by enabling private persons at their own expense or with the assistance of Building Societies, to provide themselves with houses of their own.

THE educational policy of the Conservative Party is to support all measures designed to carry out the purpose and the spirit of the Education Act, 1944. The Party realize that such a policy will be expensive and must be carried out, therefore, with care and by degrees. The first priority, however, must be given to bringing about as speedily as possible a reduction in the size of classes. This will need an expansion of training facilities, especially for women teachers. The needs of infant and primary schools should be the matters to be dealt with next, while nothing should be done to "level down" secondary education.

The Conservatives are determined to maintain and develop the social services, and will make full use of the various voluntary organizations which have done so much in the past to initiate such services. They believe that the Socialist policy of doing

* See "Problems of a Socialist Government", Gollancz, 1933.

away with voluntary effort, and substituting for it the work of paid officials, has been a costly failure.

Local administration in rural areas, in the opinion of the Conservative Party, is a matter which, in view of the special needs of the countryside, needs a special approach. It ought not—indeed, cannot—be satisfactorily dealt with merely by merging rural areas with urban areas, a practice which has been on the increase during recent years. The special housing problems in country districts must be studied with care and consideration. The Conservatives advocate the putting in force of the Housing (Rural Workers) Act passed by the Coalition Government. The present Government refused to utilize this measure, and the bill which they promised to replace it has not yet been produced.

Rural water supplies and sewerage disposal are matters for which little or nothing has been done by the Socialists, but which the Conservatives feel should be proceeded with as speedily as possible.

Greater security for allotment holders, and the provision of additional land for them, is a further aim of Conservative policy, which fully recognizes the national importance of doing everything possible to promote the fertility of the land, in order to increase the production of home-grown food.

FROM this short summary of the aims of the two opposing sides—Socialists and anti-Socialists—in the coming local elections, it is tolerably clear that the policy of the former is not so much to make the existing system of local administration more efficient, and more representative of local interests, as to centralize it still further, either by the establishment of "regionalism" or by an increase of the control of the Central Government over the local authorities.

The policy of the latter, on the other hand, is to remodel local Government by a readjustment of boundaries where necessary, to define more clearly and to render more effective the functions of local authorities, both great and small, and to reduce, so far as it is possible, the encroachments of the State into the sphere of local administration. But although the issues before the electors should on this occasion be clear enough, it is just as well for all those who are interested in the preservation of local self-government to remember that these issues will be obscured by the Socialists. Their tactics at the local elections will be to fight the battle, not so much upon matters directly affecting local Government, but upon the general policy of their Party during the past five years, and its programme for the future. The local electors, many of whom it must be remembered are no longer ratepayers, will be asked to give a vote of confidence to Mr. Attlee and his colleagues: the battle will be fought by the Socialists on strictly Party lines.

THE Conservatives, if they are to win, must put forth their full party strength, and they must be prepared, too, to support Liberal and Independent candidates, provided that such candidates are definitely opposed to any further reduction in the powers and functions of local authorities, and to any further control by the State in the administration of local Government. The fight will be a stiff one, and it is to be hoped that candidates of sufficient calibre will come forward on the Conservative side. In the past, such candidates have been difficult to find—for seats on local councils have hitherto, for various reasons, not attracted the type of individual who would be of most use in local administration. To-day, however, the work of local councils is far more interesting and important than it was in the past, and offers opportunities for public service which is of infinite value to the community. Young men and women who can possibly spare the time should interest themselves in local Government—especially those who may contemplate a political career—for it gives them experience in administration and a knowledge of the domestic needs of the people which will be of real assistance to them, should they enter the House of Commons.

LAUGHTER IN THE NEXT ROOM

By OSBERT SITWELL

This is the first of the series of extracts which we are allowed to make from the fourth volume of Sir Osbert Sitwell's autobiography Left Hand, Right Hand! *which will be published shortly by Messrs. Macmillan under the title of* Laughter in the Next Room.

THOUGH the practice of his art may afford a writer his chief pleasure, no less than his principal and constant source of worry, though, too, a sudden inspiration may constitute his greatest luxury, yet a minute account of this, his real existence, would be—can only be—of but slight interest to the reader. How is it possible to picture for him the quotidian miseries and splendours of a life attached to the inkpot, the many months spent at a table, the hours when every disturbance is furiously resented, the other, more occasional moments when every interruption is welcome, the evenings when an author looks on his work and finds it good, or those frequent nights when it seems to him to have fallen unbelievably short of what he had intended, the inflations of self-conceit and the agonies of self-reproach, the days when everything grows to giant proportions because it has meaning, the afternoons when all dwindles to pygmy and shows none? What of the racked and sleepless hours before the dawn? Who would wish for a book composed of these? Further, though authorship is, in a sense, a peripatetic profession, since the Muses commune with an author often on long walks through woods, or on the top of mountains, and he is able after this fashion to conquer obdurate details, and albeit he can pack his fountain-pen and write anywhere so long as the place pleases him for writing, yet also it is the most static of careers, entailing for the majority of its practitioners a nearly monastic seclusion and regularity of life during a greater part of the year. Because, even if the particular poem or story on which he is engaged, or proposes to start, does not in reality occupy many weeks, nevertheless to have the energy and leisure in which to give the process of creation and growth its chance of fullest development, the author should be allowed to dwell within a nobly proportioned edifice of days and hours, which offers vistas of space on every side so that he does not have to hurry or cramp his productions. He cannot press out the final flicker of fire or obtain the last spark of energy, if he knows he must soon begin preparations to leave his work in a fortnight's time, in order to deliver a lecture, or, it may be, see his mother. He must be granted, if he is to achieve his best, as many days as are necessary for him not to be obliged to count them, a period peaceful and unharassed. Adventures, troubles, joys, the irruption even of a dearest friend into the quiet and regular rhythm of life that a writer has to establish, can break up a whole book. Moreover, if employed upon a poem or something which requires an equivalent trance-like intensity, the writer will remain for some days, or it may be weeks, in so nervous and supersensitive a state, or feel so dull and numb to the outer world, that any slight shock, a pointless altercation or a mere change in his mode of existence, may destroy the life in what he is at work creating. Remember, too, when next you turn the pages of the book you have by your chair, that, if it be a serious attempt, it can scarcely have been completed in under eighteen months and may have taken much longer, and thus you touch the very essence of an author's time, as well as a solid block of it. This does not mean, of

course, that he has been slave to the pen-wiper and the blotting-pad, day and night for that whole period; but in the volume, notwithstanding, will be, I should hazard, twelve hundred hours of actual composing, writing and revising; that is to say, if it were concentrated, fifty days of twenty-four hours, without time off to eat or sleep. And in addition the book will have consumed countless weeks of indirect labour, and will have cost him the endless troubles provoked by forgetting to answer letters and keep appointments; because he has had something better to do, gentle reader.

IF, for these among many reasons, it is useless to try very exactly to portray the life of a working author, nevertheless a consideration of one or two joys or sorrows peculiar to his calling may interest persons unacquainted with them. They resemble, I believe, those of no other profession. As a writer's fame increases, he is, for example, occasionally, though seldom enough, granted the singular sensation—almost I had written pleasure, but that is not an exact enough description to apply to the mixture of nervous apprehension, curiosity and gratification roused in him—of noticing, first that he seems unusually conversant with the book which the fellow-guest in the hotel, or fellow-passenger in an omnibus, is reading, and then, with a shock I have tried to define, of realizing why: that it is one of his own books.

Then, again, as an author grows older, he can read a book of his own, when it has become stone cold. This, I think, is one of the most extraordinary experiences he can professionally undergo, more unusual and stimulating than the first sight of a copy of his own first printed book. Before, he has seemed to be part of the volume, or has only read it with a view to correction and revision, while the body of it was still warm with his blood, and he could recall the particular difficulties he had encountered in one paragraph, or the unexpected ease with which the next had been completed. But now he can approach it, as he takes up other books, with the same wish to derive pleasure or an extension of experience from it, with the same casual eye for merits and faults, and with no memory of the processes of making it—though doubtless at the end of it he cannot help trying to reckon the loss and gain accrued in the intervening years. Thus last year I celebrated a private jubilee by reading *Before the Bombardment* twenty years after it had come out, and must confess to having greatly enjoyed it. It was most strange to be presented, after this fashion, between the lines, with the likeness of myself as a young author. There seemed to be no tie between us, yet plainly we were the same person.

LESS rare, but none the less a pleasure, is the settling down in a new place for a long stretch of work, the happiness of unpacking, probably in a hotel bedroom, and of the technical preparations, the finding of a table that is steady, of a chair of the right shape, the purchase and spreading of the blotting-paper, the filling of pens. The room in which an author writes is of infinite importance to him, his whole world for those fifty periods of twenty-four hours. Light, heat and absence of noise are the first and most essential requisites: but the feeling of the room, the view from it, the way the light falls in it, are also of great concern to him. To speak less generally and more of myself, I love large apartments, richly furnished, but to rest in, and not for work. A great deal of my writing has been done—in the course of a page or two I will explain why—in the barest of hotel bedrooms. *Before the Bombardment*, which I recognize as the corner-stone of the house I have tried to build, was begun and finished in two consecutive winters in South Italy, in the white-washed cell of a hotel which had formerly been a monastery, with a fire of logs of orange-tree wood glowing on the hearth with its own peculiar green and yellow flame, or hissing and perfuming the dry air of the bitter mountain cold (which in winter descends to sea-level), and with a window placed so that from where I sat—often, as I thought, just looking out of it when I should have been concentrating (though that, too, had I known it, was an indirect part of the novel),—a view of sea, plumed like a peacock, and of distant

ranges beyond, presented itself to me, and seemed to stretch for ever into the innumerable and diverse beauties of air and sky at that season. *Escape with Me!*—at least, the second half of it—was written in a disused kitchen, domed and shaped like a Moorish marabout, opening on a terrace, in the ancient ruined city of Antigua, Guatemala. There, in tropical heat, the great prospect girdled by volcanoes and the blue blossom of jacaranda-trees, I sat picturing Peking, the while a sentry-vulture, posted at a small window, no doubt by the order of his organization in case I should die during writing, would, at intervals of about an hour, flutter a hideous blue-bottle-dark, serrated wing in at the aperture or, more perturbing still, poke his bald, carrion-coloured neck through it, to see if I were yet ready for him and his band; when, with an accuracy of aim of which I should never have dreamed myself capable, I would hurl my copy of *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* at him through the narrow opening, and he would give a squawk, which said all too plainly, "As you know, duty is duty, and it's only a question of time if you stay here long enough", and then flap hungrily away, only to return a minute after I had gone out on to the terrace to retrieve my invaluable missile: wherefore in time the lexicon lost its cover, and on my return—for it is difficult to carry about the world a book in this condition—I gave it away to the Estate Office at Renishaw; but I could see that when I said to Maynard Hollingworth, "It is only in this state owing to my having been obliged to throw it regularly at a vulture", the excuse sounded, and he thought it, far-fetched . . . To take another instance, most of the poems in *England Reclaimed* were composed in the bedroom of a hotel outside Syracuse, as was, a few years later, *Winters of Content*, in spite of the many troubles, and the perpetual letters that in consequence would assail me and had to be answered, relating to a previous book over which a libel action was threatened. (The injured lady, I recollect, gave an interview to a newspaper, in which she said, "Sitwell compares me to Madame Bovary. I do not know who she is, but my friends tell me she is a French classic!") The volumes of *Left Hand, Right Hand!* so far as they have progressed, have been written at Renishaw, in my small study enclosed within the thick walls of the oldest part of the house, and hung with the originals of the illustrations to this work by John Piper. Here, among towers of books and accumulated papers, are to be found, too, many objects familiar to me since my earliest childhood, for the room formerly served my father as his chief writing-place.

BY now, I conclude that the truth of the statement made at the beginning of this chapter has been established for the reader: that the story of an author's pursuit of his profession can hold little of concern to the outside world. The facts exampled above, slight and dull though they may be, are the chief I can muster. On the other hand, his, as it were, extra-mural activities (and the way he, as a writer, looks at them) can entertain and even, who knows, instruct the reader. Fortunately, my exterior adventures in the time of which I write were numerous and varied, and soon I return to one in particular. But first I must ask him to hold in the background of his mind for the remainder of this book, during most of which I talk of other things, the many long, often arduous but contented months devoted each year to writing; those vistas of days, for the most part unexciting and of a regular rhythm, spent usually abroad and in company with my brother Sacheverell, William Walton or Adrian Stokes, and other practitioners of the arts.

POSSESSED of many interests and, I am thankful and proud to write, of many friends, I found it needful, if I was to become a writer, to escape from them for long periods. The world was both too much with me and against me. And in this connection I recall that when, after the publication of a book which had enjoyed a great success, my sister received an invitation to luncheon from a woman we had known for many years, but who never remembered our existence until reviews in the newspapers reminded her of it, Edith sent her the following logical reply.

Dear Mrs. Almer,

After five years, you have again been kind enough to ask me to luncheon. The reason for this is that I have just published a successful book: the reason I have had a successful book is that I do not go out and waste my time and energy, but work hard, morning and afternoon. If I accept your kind invitation, I shall have to leave off earlier in the morning, and shall be too tired to work in the afternoon. Then my next book will not be such a success, and you will not ask me to luncheon; or, at the best, less often. So that, under these circumstances, I am sure you will agree it is wiser for me not to accept your present kind invitation.

Yours sincerely,
Edith Sitwell.

ON the whole, then, so bitter had the long war made me, so full was I still of rage and despair, and of contempt for those who would not see, that I did not, in the years immediately following 1918, make new friends with the ease of the days before the war. But to this there was one glittering exception. Certain friends helped greatly, moreover, instead of hindering, and chief of these was my new friend, Mrs. Henry McLaren or Lady Aberconway as she is now. Indeed, any account of my daily life between the end of the First World War and the present day would be incomplete without the mention of her. I had been first taken to her house in 1916 or '17, and in 1926 I dedicated to her *Before the Bombardment:* so that it must have been somewhere between those dates, I think in 1920, that a mere acquaintanceship first sloughed its dull and torpid chrysalis, and soared as friendship: yet as sometimes happens in things important to me, I cannot be sure of the precise moment. I am indeed grateful to her, no less for her wisdom than for a rarer and opposite quality which transcends it; that is to say that she never hesitates to fly in the face of common sense should the most loyal and scrupulous principles of friendship she upholds demand the adoption of such tactics. Many of the most delightful hours of my life have been passed in her company and, if it were only for that reason, I must try to describe her remarkable personality, albeit to attempt to seize on either her appearance or character and endeavour to add permanence to their other attributes is far from easy: for both are volatile, not in the sense of being gay or lively—though as a companion she can often be that—, but because every quality about her is so much relative to other qualities, and so finely constituted; her looks, for example, her bearing, the words she speaks depend to such an extent on her colouring and expression, more particularly on the aquamarine glow of her eyes which dominate her whole face, as well as on a singular style, an individual elegance and general crystalline sparkle, that they are difficult to isolate and fix in dull ink on paper. With the immediate impression she produces on entering a room, of delicacy of texture and sensitiveness of feeling, goes, too, at first sight and most misleadingly what appears to be an unusual formality, this being produced by a natural precision of demeanour and speech, which, as one grows to know her better, adds an element of surprise to the effect of the discovery of her most unconventional wit and wits, in the same way that one finds out, too, before long, how her discretion covers an unusual and warm understanding of human beings.

THE daughter of Sir Melville Macnaghten, a former famous head of Scotland Yard, and of Lady Macnaghten—whom the late Lady Oxford once told me she considered the most beautiful woman she had ever seen—, it must be from her father that Christabel has inherited so many of the qualities that go to make a great detective. Just as she is one of the two or three people to whom I should apply in a case of human suffering, so, if I wanted to know what had happened to someone or something, and why, she undoubtedly would be the first person to whom I should turn for information, sure that if she were not already in possession of it, she would soon obtain it. For, in addition to being inexhaustibly resourceful, she permits herself the utmost bias on behalf of her friends, and there would therefore, I think, be no lengths to which she would not go to help them.

Further, the elegant fragility of her appearance masks a formidable will-power. All this, then, helps to explain the unusual kind of compliment I once heard my brother pay her.

"Christabel!", he observed, "I've suddenly realized that you would be the ideal companion for a shipwreck!"

"Why?"

"Because one could depend on you to push someone else off the raft to make room for a friend!"

Yet this tribute, though it sums up a little of what I want to signify, altogether leaves out of account the pleasure and fun of her company, and the sort of surprise that it offers you, while it also entirely omits the beauty she can create in her surroundings. The raft would, after it had been made safe for her friends, have very soon become, I think, a most desirable, habitable, comfortable and even beautiful retreat. Her extraordinary gift of tact, and her effacement of her own wishes—though never of her captivating personality—in every friendship upon which she enters, make her singularly unlike the general run of people in her every response.

There were others, however, who made up for her unselfishness. There were many who wished to waste their own time, and many who wished merely to waste yours. Quite apart, then, from attempts at forcible feeding, from requests to write prefaces or epilogues, or a few favourable words to be quoted on covers, to read manuscripts and send criticisms gratis, open—or shut—exhibitions, give interviews on any subject, autograph books, attend conferences, join clubs, sign letters of protest and manifestos, take part in symposiums, speak on the B.B.C. for infant fees, support every sort of society for the prevention of one, and encouragement of another—or sometimes the same—thing, write articles, celebrate centenaries, deliver lectures, and all those perpetual and ingenious schemes to make you catch colds and agues in a thousand different ways, and so prevent you from working for a time—or better still for ever; quite apart, then, from all this (which is the lot of every well-known English-speaking writer), my parents by themselves would have been sufficient to render impossible any serious and consecutive effort. To their children, they constituted a profession in themselves, and one which wore out health and exhausted patience. You never knew what they might not do next. When, a few years later, I was at last successful in persuading my father that he would be happier if he resided abroad, the paths of his children became a little easier: but until that moment it was out of the question to work untroubled and with ease at home in England. The letters from my father which rained in by every post, on subjects ranging from the composition of the atom to the best empirical methods of cutting your toe-nails, but, so far as I was concerned, for the most part relating to business and complaining of my lack or misuse of ability, concluded often with a *catalogue raisonné* of my faults of character and conduct, and were enough to oblige one to use up every scrap of energy in reply. My sister faced the storms in her own flat—even though, by coincidence, she was curiously liable to be away when my family came to London. My father's views on woman's place in the world—which were that she should be out of it—allowed her a little more freedom from his letters (on the other hand, my mother demanded her presence the whole time), whereas it was his duty as father, ancestor and descendant in one to torment my brother, and still more myself in my character of eldest son, on every conceivable occasion. He liked to make plans, to inflate and deflate them at will, in the manner of a child playing with a toy balloon, and would plague an idea as a dog worries a bone. In addition, he must know exactly what we were doing or proposing to do. "It is dangerous for you", he used to point out, "to lose touch with me for a single day. You never know when you may not need the benefit of my experience and advice."

THE BRAZILIAN SCENE REVIEWED

By R. G. WALKER

WHEN General Eurico Dutra assumed office on January 30th, 1946, he was faced with one of the most difficult tasks of any Brazilian President in recent years. The return to a democratic form of government, after fifteen years of virtual dictatorship, followed closely on the suspension of hostilities in Europe. Violent political antagonisms had to be conciliated, national economy had to be re-adjusted to peace-time conditions, and the country's finances, debilitated by war expenditure and administrative extravagance, had to be replaced on a solid basis.

The Constituent Assembly, elected in December 1945, five weeks after the deposal of Dr. Getulio Vargas by the military leaders, met in January to draft a new Constitution, in place of the arbitrary Charter of 1937. On completion of its work in September the Assembly split up into its component parts, into Senate and Chamber of Deputies. Elections were then held to appoint the State Governors and the Deputies to the State Legislative Assemblies. By January 1947, constitutional government was re-established throughout the country, but harmony was by no means restored in Federal and State politics.

IN Brazil the great majority of voters still rally around an individual, not a party, and the designation of the latter, or its platform, often very vague, mean little to the bulk of the electorate. This tendency, and the fact that the electoral law in force in 1946 permitted the registration of numerically insignificant groups, led to the formation of an excessive number of small parties. All put forward candidates at the elections, and many of them were successful. No party obtained an adequate working majority in the Federal Legislature, and the official group, the Social Democrats, were powerless to put through urgent government projects against concerted opposition. Confusion and bitterness marked the 1947 session. In the Lower House a large proportion of the members were new to politics and ignorant of parliamentary procedure. Political feeling ran high. The appearance of Dr. Getulio Vargas in the Senate, where he represented San Paulo, and of his followers in the Chamber of Deputies, provoked bitter recriminations from the enemies of the late Dictator. Discord was aggravated and prolonged throughout the year by the Communists, who had succeeded in electing their leader, Luiz Carlos Prestes, to the Senate and fourteen of his disciples to the Lower Chamber, consisting of 304 Deputies.

The Brazilian Communist Party came out into the open for the first time after the 1945 Armistice. It then ceased to pose as an advanced Socialist party, and was registered under its own name by the Supreme Electoral Court. Its existence was contrary, however, to the Constitution of 1946, which prohibits the registration of political parties whose programme or action conflicts with the democratic regime. The new Charter also condemns propaganda of violent measures to subvert political or social order, and of racial and class prejudices. On all these counts the Communists were vulnerable. Their leader admitted in the Senate that his Party would side with Russia if that country went to war with Brazil. Communist newspapers and speakers attacked democratic institutions and incited the people to violence.

IN May 1947, the Communist party was struck off the political register by the Supreme Electoral Court, its cells were closed throughout the country, the Youth Organization was dissolved, and a Bill

was laid before Parliament to annul the mandates of the representatives of any party declared to be illegal. The project met with strong opposition in the Chamber of Deputies, and only became law in January 1948, after the Social Democrats had come to a working agreement with the chief opposition group, the National Democratic Union, and the Republican party.

The exclusion of the Communist members from the legislative bodies called forth a series of disorders and attempted risings in many parts of Brazil. Detailed plans for a revolutionary movement and widespread sabotage were seized by the police. Nests of Soviet agents from Eastern Europe, who had been operating throughout South America, were broken up at San Paulo and Porto Alegre. A number of foreign agitators were deported, and several ex-Deputies, implicated in these events, were detained for trial, but the leader, Luiz Prestes, managed to escape. Since May the situation has been quiet, except for one abortive attempt in September to provoke conflict between the military and police.

The Bolshevists have gone discreetly underground, but the Brazilian Fascists, or Integralists, now united and legally registered as the Popular Representation Party, have begun to attract attention again. Ostensibly they are only concerned in fighting Communism but, rightly or wrongly, they are said to be behind a recent movement to discredit the National Congress.

The Three-Party Agreement and the cancellation of the Communist mandates eliminated discord and systematic obstruction from the Federal Senate and Chamber of Deputies, but harmony was less easily restored in the State Legislative Assemblies. In the poorer, less-developed States of the North and West-Centre political passions always flame readily. The sudden restoration of constitutional guarantees and freedom of speech released feelings long repressed. Post-war depression and economic difficulties aggravated the situation. Violent quarrels broke out in several States between the Governors and the Legislative or Judiciary Powers. Each in turn clamoured for Federal Intervention, basing its appeal on constitutional grounds: to guarantee the free exercise of one or other of the State powers, or to ensure the execution of a judicial decision. In every case General Dutra sent his personal representatives, instead of the army, and settled the dispute by persuasive methods. By the end of the year peace was almost, if not wholly, restored throughout the Federation.

THE new Constitution has now entered its third year of existence, and continues to meet with general approval, although several of its clauses are subjected to criticism. It suppressed the autocratic tendencies and the provisions for a corporate system instituted by the 1937 Charter. It restricts the powers of the President of the Republic, who is no longer referred to as the Supreme Head of the Nation, re-establishes the balance between the Executive and Legislative Powers, revives the Senate, and restores the autonomy of the States and Municipalities. The Chamber of Deputies is now again composed exclusively of representatives of the people, elected on the principle of proportional representation by the States, the Federal District and the Territories for a period of four years. Indirect suffrage by the Municipal Chambers is abolished. The Senate consists of representatives of the States and the Federal District, elected on the majority principle for a period of eight years, renewable alternately by one-third and two-thirds every four years. The Federal Council, which replaced the Senate under the 1937 Charter, was to consist of one representative of each State, elected by the Legislative Assembly and approved by the Governor, and ten members appointed by the President of the Republic. Neither the Chamber of Deputies as constituted by Dr. Getulio Vargas nor the Federal Council came into being, as the oft-promised elections were not held.

Congress remains in session during nine months of the year, and can be convened by two-thirds of the members of either Chamber or by the President of the Republic. Senators and Deputies are immune from arrest or legal proceedings, except for common crime, throughout the term of their

mandates. The 1937 Charter limited legislative sessions to four months, thereby extending the period during which the President could act freely in certain matters. It empowered the President, alone, to convoke extraordinary meetings, and only recognized parliamentary immunities during sessions, thus placing a strong weapon in the hands of an arbitrary government.

BY the new Constitution the President is elected for five years, and cannot be re-elected for the term immediately following. He and his Ministers may be impeached before the Chamber of Deputies, and if the accusation is upheld by an absolute majority he, or they, may be sent for trial by the Supreme Federal Court or the Senate, according to whether the accusation is of common crime or official misconduct. Ministers are appointed and dismissed by the President of the Republic.

This is one of the points on which critics seize. A minority in the Constituent Assembly of 1946, which is now gaining adherents, wished to replace the Presidential System, adopted in the first Republican Charter of 1891, by a parliamentary form of government, in which Ministers are appointed and dismissed by Congress. The arguments employed for and against the change, and the countries held up to exemplify the merits of each system, suggest to an impartial observer that it is the men who govern, not the form of government, that counts.

Other adverse criticisms are of an economic and social nature. Extreme nationalists consider the new Constitution too liberal, while the advocates of free enterprise complain that its restrictions hamper initiative and discourage foreign capital. Business men are disturbed by the prospects of increased State intervention in economic activities, and by the advanced precepts of social legislation. These tend to undermine discipline and encourage absenteeism in the present stage of the labourer's political and social development. The phase is temporary, of course; as the workman becomes accustomed to improved conditions and high wages it will disappear, but during the present labour shortage it is slowing down production.

ECONOMIC and financial difficulties have loomed even larger than political discords over the Brazilian scene during the past three years. In 1946, when General Dutra assumed office, the country was facing a sharp economic crisis. An unprecedented demand was made upon Brazil for raw materials and manufactured goods during the war. Agricultural, mineral and industrial production was stepped-up and new enterprises were created, several with mixed State and private capital. Paper money was issued without restraint to finance exports and ambitious schemes of public works. The currency in circulation increased four-fold between 1939 and 1946. Banks granted credits freely, even for business of a speculative nature, and new banking houses sprang up over-night. Trade boomed. Professional men and civil servants, infected by the virus of speculation, plunged into the export trade and real estate business. Properties changed hands at grossly inflated prices, and great blocks of flats and offices rose on the site of any modest building which could be snapped up. Whole quarters of Rio de Janeiro and San Paulo were suddenly demolished, as if struck by bombs, and sky-scrapers emerged from the debris, completely changing the aspect of those cities. Luxurious restaurants and night-clubs opened, and were crowded to overflow in spite of exorbitant charges. A new moneyed class appeared, and spent with ostentation rather than discernment. Money was plentiful, but excessive exports had depleted the home market, provoking shortages and swollen prices. Wage earners suffered grievous hardships, and interminable files of women and children stood for hours outside the provision shops, only to be turned away, empty-handed, at the end. Between 1939 and 1946 the cost of living rose 267 per cent.

After hostilities ceased, as peace-time production was resumed in other countries, Brazil's exports diminished and foreign goods, mainly non-utility articles, began to flood the market, dissipating exchange reserves. Normal sources of world supply,

shut off during the war, were re-opened, and many of Brazil's activities, specially developed to meet allied needs, became paralysed. Issues of paper money could not be suspended immediately, and the currency in circulation increased by a further 18 per cent during 1946. The financial year ended with a deficit of 2,633 million cruzeiros, or £34,000,000.

EARLY in 1947 drastic steps were taken to check inflation. Currency issues were suspended, public expenditure was curtailed, and bank credits were restricted to the needs of productive business. The Income Tax Law was revised to raise contributions on big incomes, excess profits were frozen, and 20 per cent of the value of export bills was paid for in Treasury Bonds. Exports were held back until the needs of the home market had been met. Imports were controlled to shut out non-essential goods, and reserve exchange for urgently needed machinery and equipment.

These measures aroused violent opposition, entailed the failure of several ephemeral undertakings and caused some temporary disorganization, but the situation improved rapidly. Only one modest currency issue, representing 0.5 per cent of the amount in circulation, was made in December to meet the seasonal demands of industry and commerce. Federal Revenue increased during the year by 19 per cent, expenditure decreased 6 per cent, and the financial year ended with a small surplus for the first time in forty-two years. Money became scarce, but food rationing ceased and the rise in prices was momentarily checked.

Industrial production and the value of sales increased steadily during 1948, and by September were 23 and 15 per cent higher than in September, 1947. Exports had risen 31 per cent while imports had dropped 36 per cent, foreshadowing a favourable balance of foreign trade at the end of the year. Finally, the government accounts for the first ten months showed that revenue had exceeded expenditure by £4,000,000.

UNFORTUNATELY, the pressure of inflationary forces was renewed early in the year, owing to stock manipulations and the high cost of imports from the United States, which represent nearly 50 per cent of Brazil's total foreign purchases. Wholesale and retail prices had risen 11 and 5 per cent, respectively, by September, and at the end of the year a wave of all-round salary increases accelerated the upward tendency. In May, 1948, General Dutra found it necessary to submit to Congress a scheme for re-adjusting the pay of the federal forces and civil servants, a very numerous class in Brazil. The project, which represents an additional burden to the exchequer of £20,000,000 annually, was approved in November with effect as from August 1st. Back-pay, amounting to £7,800,000, will be spread over twelve monthly instalments. This project was followed by another, which raised the emoluments of the magistrates by £416,000, and in December the members of Congress risked public criticism by augmenting their own subsidies. These increases have let loose a flood of irresistible demands for additional pay from all classes of workers, and a new upward rush of prices and cost of living is inevitable.

The extra Treasury payments can be met, the Government asserts, without permanently increasing the volume of currency, but they cannot fail to aggravate the financial position. The Budget Law for 1949, which raises the Consumption Tax, an indirect tribute, estimates Revenue for the coming year at 18,228,650,000 cruzeiros (£237,000,000), an increase of 26 per cent over the 1948 Budget. Expenditure is fixed at 19,360,755,769 cruzeiros (£252,000,000), or an increase of 32 per cent, due to lavish regional allotments and additional Staff payments. The latter now represent 42 per cent of the total estimated expenditure.

IT is very unlikely that the year's working will result in a deficit of £15,000,000. General Dutra, who neither vetoed nor sanctioned the law in accordance with custom, and left the President of the Senate to promulgate it, has entrusted its execution exclusively to his Minister of Finance, Snr. Corrêa e Castro, who has steered the country through two difficult years. He will certainly cut every item which

cannot be met out of revenue. General Dutra recommends a reduction in the armed forces, and has ordered the postponement of all new work until after June 1949. During the first half of the year only urgent work, already advanced, may be proceeded with, and expenditure may not exceed 75 per cent of the allotted credit.

Brazil's obvious task during 1949 will be to increase production, in order to combat inflation and restore the national finances. This will require capital, a considerable part of which will be available in the country if non-productive expenditure is eliminated, and American interests seem disposed to contribute funds provided certain restrictions on foreign enterprise are removed. Large quantities of agricultural machinery will be needed to replace spade and hoe on the farms, and make good the shortage of labour, caused by a rush to the towns. Factories, mines and transport services require materials to replace equipment which could not be renewed during the war, and is now obsolete or worn-out. Much has been imported since 1946, and local manufacturers are producing many items, but far more is needed, and as Europe is unable to supply adequate quantities Brazil must draw on her scanty store of dollars.

THERE is not much prospect of a big increase in production during 1949, but much may be done in two years. The wheat crop has been doubled since 1946. It amounted to 500,000 tons in 1948, and large areas will be brought under grain in the southern States in 1949. Rice plantations are being irrigated and mechanized to increase the yield. The Ministry of Agriculture is installing artificial semination posts in cattle districts, and importing pedigree stock to improve local breeds. Factories are being established in agricultural centres to industrialize animal and vegetable products, in order to reduce costs and give employment to the inhabitants. Over four hundred miles of railroad have been laid since 1946, and twice that length should be put down during the next two years. New roads are also being built in every State to facilitate distribution and marketing.

The production of pig-iron and steel has been increased by 100 and 200 per cent in three years, and Brazil's heavy industry, inaugurated in 1946, is working at 70 per cent of capacity in all branches. The local railways, shipyards, factories and building trade are using iron and steel work made from national raw materials, and neighbouring countries are eagerly absorbing surplus production. Shipments of iron ore from Brazil have recently doubled, and the Itabira mines, formerly British, should be able to export 1,500,000 tons by 1951.

New hydraulic power stations are being erected this year in several States, and the supply of electrical energy will be doubled within five years. Brazil's petroleum is also being developed, with or without United States aid. Seventy-eight wells, with a potential output of 11,600 barrels daily, are producing petroleum in Bahia, and prospecting is proceeding actively in other regions. Work has started on the first national refinery, and three others have been ordered abroad to refine imported crude oil.

OPLAND: MJÖSA Near LILLEHAMMER
(By courtesy of the Information Office, Norwegian Embassy)

NORWEGIAN HOLIDAY, 1948

By LORD MOUNTEVANS*

LIKE many others who have a second home in the Northern Fairyland, I flew with my wife to Norway at the end of July to be the guests of her family. And, what's more, to have a holiday with my own boys and their gay young wives in the restful stillness of the mountains.

It was an unforgettable visit, which I can best describe in terms of colour, contrast, humour, healthy sport and unbounded hospitality, all wrapped up in that which the Norsemen call "stemning" — a comprehensive term for the right atmosphere, the right company and a carefree mixture of that joyous enchantment, which is indeed rare in these troubled times.

The flight in a Norwegian machine in fine weather is worth making if only for the lack of fuss and the courtesy of the aircraft crew.

Trygve, my broad-shouldered Viking brother-in-law, with his good-looking son, came to meet us at the airport and sped us to the family's fjord home where we spent a few days of sunbathing and swimming before motoring up to the mountains. Although we were only a few miles from Oslo we might well have been in the sunlit Southern Seas. The rocks around us were plentifully occupied by bronzed Adonises and well-shaped Venuses, splendid human specimens to whom physical fitness has become almost a religion.

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* *Lord Mountevans was known for his services in the First World War as "Evans of the* Broke*"*

CONSIDERING that the Nazi occupation had lasted five years and that so much of the water-sports gear had been done away with by the German hordes, it was quite surprising to see so many small yachts in the fjord and such well-cut sails.

Thanks to the Government's psychological appreciation of the people and their needs, petrol for motorboats and cars is made specially available for the holiday season, so we were able to move to our mountain home, two hundred miles northward, in true comfort and style.

How lovely is the main valley, Gudbrandsdalen, and what a variety of scenery and colour! The greens are almost unbelievable. At one place I counted seventeen different greens amongst the meadows and farmlands, the shrubs, the trees, the woodlands, foothills and mountain slopes.

Our route ran for sixty miles along the eastern shore of Mjösa, Norway's largest lake, and the weather was so sunny and warm that when we stopped for our picnic lunch the temptation was so great that we all swam in the crystal-clear water, although we had no bathing costumes. However, nobody bothers overmuch about these superfluities in Norway!

Leaving the lake near Lillehammer, a small town much beloved by artists, we came to the outflow of the Laage river and kept this in sight for another sixty miles. I have special reasons for remembering this ice-green, rushing water, for I had to land on an ice floe hereabouts during the first few days of the German invasion.

Now came a very sharp contrast in the nature of the country, high fir, pine and birch-covered hills and mountains and a series of wooden villages, saeters or summer farms, and red-painted sheds and outhouses, rather beautiful white-painted wooden churches mostly in Gothic style, some of them dating centuries back, and, everywhere the little cream-coloured horses, sure-footed, thick-necked animals which are equally at home in the lowlands and the highlands, in shafts or in sledge harness.

ONE could write a book about the horses of Norway; they are full of character and seem to be framed for the part they play in the life and literature of this fascinating land. Not very long ago I opened a packet of Norwegian cigarettes—"Blue Master" they were called—and on the packet was a typical Norwegian horse's head. Funnily enough the smell of the cigarettes reminded me of Gudbrandsdalen, it was the peculiar agreeable scent of horse and hay: the smell of Norwegian summer farmlands. I was given those cigarettes by a modern Viking, a Norwegian ship captain, Thor Bruo, who had carried in all 60,000 American troops, a thousand at a time, through the Pacific war-zones, a distance which was equal to nearly three times round the world.

"Shut your eyes, now smell." He did so. "What does that smell remind you of?" I asked. "Gudbrandsdalen," he replied!

Nearer and nearer we came to what is my idea of Paradise, Andvord's hut at Golaa.

Up a terribly steep and narrow mountain road, all curves and swings and slopes, and then a tumble-down shanty, owned by a smiling, pear-shaped old woman who sells us cream, and then, a mile farther up, our hut, which I have heard called "The Home of the Happy Smile".

A SERIOUS-FACED woman of fifty and a smiling strongly-built man of the mountains awaited us. Wood fires were sparkling and crackling, and a meal of freshly caught trout, roasted chicken and home-baked cakes was almost "shouting" to be eaten.

The saeter-jenta, or mountain maid, had seen her father build the hut, which means so much to us. Incidentally it was here I came to hide from the Germans when I was endeavouring to contact King Haakon and his cabinet with the information which had been entrusted to me by Lord Halifax during the early invasion days.

Now the very select holiday-makers of the Nordic Nations spend the hottest part of the summer in the brisk, exhilarating highlands, where the smell of wood-smoke and the tinkle of cattle bells add to that pleasant

rushing water sound—the soothing music that comes from snowborn brooks.

Trout fishing, climbing, long, long walks, occasional swims and even tennis passed the days much too quickly away, and then when our children had to return to their homes and their jobs we made a trip to Olden, which is so lovely that it takes one's breath away.

Here, on the west coast, we stayed with two very pro-British Norwegian friends and fished for sea trout and salmon.

Thanks largely to Mr. Attlee, a number of English and Scottish tourists were able to visit this fjord beauty-spot, where they were made most welcome. Olden is one of the few places in Norway where the German occupation seems to have left no mark.

FOR variety of scenery alone, the journey to western Norway from Gudbrandsdalen is more than worth while—small forests, large lakes, fast-running rivers, roaring waterfalls, pretty little mountains, superb greens and rognbaer (the colourful berries of the mountain ash) that flourish in Norway right up to the North Cape beyond latitude 71 degrees, and to complete this remarkable journey a drop down an incredibly sharp-descending corkscrew road to the level of the sea. The Norwegian roadmakers are a grand lot of men permanently employed by the Government or local authorities and in places where cars have not room to pass they have blasted the rock so cleverly that a one-way traffic system has been devised to avoid what would otherwise be insuperable hold-ups.

Food this year, like the Englishman's description of *Punch*, is not as good as it used to be, except on the farms. Although the Black Market is in Norway it is not very pronounced. My brother-in-law told me the story of the peasant who came down to Oslo with two big suitcases full of butter, cheese, eggs and cream to sell at three times their normal price. Not being very

OPLAND: SOUTH FRÖN in the GUNBRANDS VALLEY

(By courtesy of the Information Office, Norwegian Embassy)

sophisticated he walked up to the first policeman he saw, and, touching his hat, said: "Excuse me, constable, but could you direct me to the Black Market?"

There is a steep increase in the cost of living, both in town and country, and, as in England, a tendency to overspend on luxuries and entertainments. Motor hire is three times as expensive as in pre-war days, and I rather fear for the small garage proprietor whose car-hire prices will soon put him out of business when more and more cars come on the market.

We had a dozen visitors from England, Sweden and America to stay. My elder boy's wife brought a Danish maid, who proved to be a treasure. The Americans and an English peer both brought very helpful chauffeurs.

MY wife and I also paid a visit to other friends, who have acquired some first-class salmon fishing on the Nord fjord, where they built a house some years before the war. Here we got more fishing and even more beautiful colours, for autumn comes very quickly, and the trees are a study in yellow and flame-colour and reds.

I had a great time with the young Norsemen who looked after us when fishing and told them stories of the invasion and many jokes against the Huns. One of them told me that the little fishing boats were commandeered by the Germans, but, after the first attempt at fishing salmon, a boat capsized and drowned the "clumsy German soldier and nearly put an end to his mate". After this, use of boats was *verboten*; they were all laid up in a farmhouse and the Norwegians referred to them always as the "British fleet". The salmon caught are mostly sold in Opdal, the nearest town. They bring from 6 to 7½ kroner a kilo, and practically pay for the upkeep of this delightful haunt.

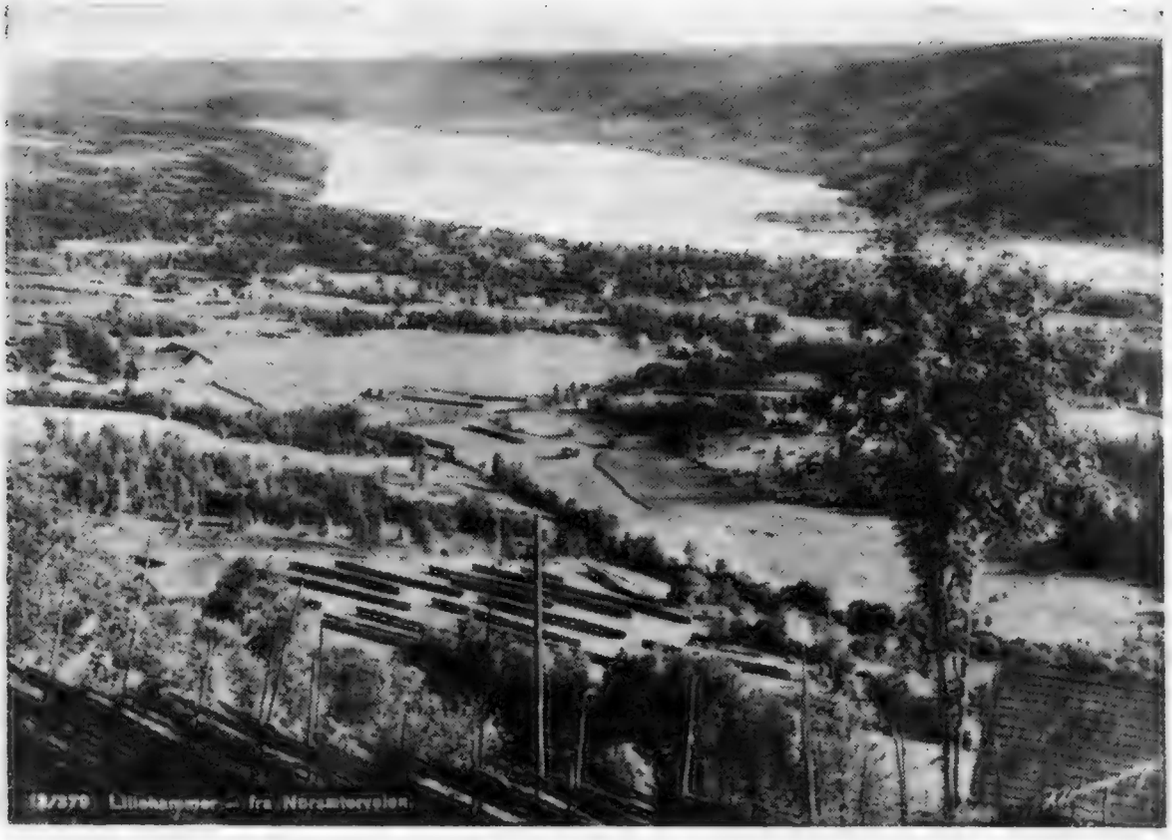
This year the grouse, or "ryper", shooting was restricted until 10th September, when we were my brother-in-law's guests at Mo-i-Rana, which is only a score of miles below the Arctic Circle. We stayed a fortnight and endured, rather than enjoyed, reasonably good sport in unreasonably bad weather. My nephew and his bride fairly raced over the ground, although it was very hard going. Personally, I prefer the Yorkshire and Scottish grouse moors and there were times when I yearned for one of the Iceland ponies to carry me up to the cloud-hidden plateaux where most of the grouse had gone. One day we were told we mustn't go to our selected locality because elk shooting was fixed that day. This disappointed me considerably, but, two days later, an elderly Norwegian sportsman, who braved the dangers of elk shooting, was himself wounded and his dog was killed outright.

We were right on the Swedish border where we made friends with the Norwegian Customs officers, who were most helpful and who invited me to fish for the trout of a fair-sized lake called Umbugta. Rod fishing had closed down the day before our arrival, but, seeing their photographs of almost salmon-sized trout, I kept the invitation open for good days to come.

THIS Norwegian holiday increased my knowledge greatly and I was glad to see how well the Government had provided for the children. They were splendidly shod and had really good stockings and clothing, which, of course, they need far more than the folk who live between 500 and a 1,000 miles farther south.

Our hotel proprietress was most enterprising and kind. She intends coming to England to take a course of hotel management at the Savoy! Moreover she is investing one and a half million kroner in this hotel business in Northern Norway. I was amazed at her knowledge of the Norwegian Lapps and Finns. Her descriptions were full of humour. Included in her retinue was a very plump cook who had just been left two hundred thousand kroner by an uncle in the States. My friend, the proprietress, told me that this amiable cook had no intention of giving up cooking for the hotel, but that as she was so happy there she asked that she might now be allowed to forego her pay!

Taking a day off on Sunday we had a chance to make a closer inspection of Mo,



LILLEHAMMER

(By courtesy of the Information Office, Norwegian Embassy

which struck me as being uncommonly like a prairie town in Saskatchewan. It was quite unlike other Norwegian towns or large villages. The railway station seemed to be the assembling place for its people, but it had its own museum founded and owned by the Meyer family and containing a collection of ancient Nordic weapons, sledges, reindeer harness and wild beast traps capable of ensnaring anything from a bear to a big brown mouse. The object which appealed mostly to me was the high-prowed fishing boat with its mast amidships and square sail with four reefs in it. It reminded me partly of the Viking ship of a thousand years ago and the much more recent Deal lugger — also one-masted, square-rigged. Everything in this model appeared to be correct. The seventy-four year old museum curator had been a sailor and a fisherman in his younger days and I listened with interest to his description of winter fishing in and around the Lofoten Islands. He warmed up when he discovered that I, too, had been at sea and that I could speak his mother-tongue as well as the language of the sea, the snows and the storm. On one occasion when he was only fourteen, he had formed one of a crew of three who had taken such a ship out into the cruel West Fjord with a fishing fleet from which his own well-built craft was the only one to come home. Yes, they are a great folk these fearless, modern Vikings, whom I had learnt to know first when I had command of our own Fishery Protection Service twenty-five years ago. The old boy would not accept a gift from us but he asked us to look at his garden and there, growing about his clean wooden home, were pansies, roses and even gladioli.

COMING back for our dinner meal we ran into a battle between two teams of "gangsters". Very young gangsters they were to be sure and dressed in their Sunday best. Each was accompanied by one big lad of fifteen or sixteen, their hair was cut and brushed and they looked as though they might be going to a Confirmation Service.

Suddenly a bright-eyed eleven-year-old, looking at the big boy, ran out in front of the others, jerked his thumbs up, gave a nod in the direction of the other gang and rushed in to commence a fight. He picked a boy of his own size and started punching him good and hearty. His victim gave way under the surprise weight of the attack but an even smaller boy took up the challenge and started a rearguard action which was the preamble to a general mêlée. Neither of the big boys took any fighting part—they just watched until there was some blood shedding here and there, nodded at one another in the best of grace and mutually called off the combatants. Evidently this was a sort of every Sunday business, the gangs moved off in opposite directions and passed with boyish condescension a group of pretty little girls with dolls or even real babies in prams—this party appeared almost to be rehearsing for a Hyde Park Parade. Boys develop very early in this far Northland, they take to the sea like young gulls and they seem to me to take equally well to sport and work and play.

In no country have I seen better relations between Government and Youth. On our three-day return motor trip we saw schoolchildren everywhere gathering in the potato harvest which seemed to be a mighty good one this year. The children get properly paid for this and they work long hours. The schools co-operate as they do in any movement calculated to help in the National interest. Little Ellen Wilkinson, late Minister of Health, promised me the year before her untimely death that she would let me take her to Norway to study the general educational scheme which is probably the best in the world as far as the school-leaving age.

AUTUMN was well advanced and those lovely valleys had changed into their autumn clothes. Only one prominent green had kept its shade by the time we were half-way south. Sharper winds with an Arctic bite in them and a couple of inches of snow reminded us that the summer had gone and we must hurry away from this Northern Fairyland.

Certain commemorative stones and very simple monuments have appeared since I first traversed these valleys and slopes, which brought me back to those unhappy invasion days. And certain mining areas and peaceful market centres showed the unmistakable mark of the German beast; whole villages that I knew had disappeared. But timber and labour, glass and metal and other materials are being rapidly made available and the building trade is putting in splendid work.

OSLO, the capital, Bergen and Trondheim, the three main cities and ports are coming back to normal but there is no doubt this year we are better off in Britain from the food, clothing and accommodation standpoint. The Norwegians are very practical people and they mostly park their children during working hours, employing what are known as "parkering tanter" (parking-aunts). These are young girls who take on a dozen children at a time during specified hours; they convoy them through crowded streets and across the traffic routes by hitching them on to a twenty-five foot rope, going half speed ahead and proceeding to the parks and the beaches. I take my hat off to these parking-aunts—they seem to have acquired a sort of patience-humour-firmness-commando complex which is undoubtedly successful.

The fair sex are competing with my sex, the unfair sex, uncommonly well. I had occasion to go to the dentist for immediate treatment before leaving Oslo and I found that my own Norwegian dentist had been called up for military service. His place was taken by Fru Tandlaegge—. Well, dentists are busy people and I hadn't time to go round dentistland and be choose-y. I talked over my dental troubles with the lady who obviously knew her job and I can say this, that she was the most tender-handed member of the dental profession that ever attended me.

FINALLY, we took the Norwegian side of the family to the National Theatre to see a play called "*Lögn og Lykke*," which was a mixture of good hard lying and love,

a clever, but gruesome drama. It was not a very thrilling play but it interested me particularly, because it reflected the Norwegian playgoer's outlook, a sort of "*Paddy The Next Best Thing*". The Norwegians are happy in their art culture and particularly in literature. I picked up one day a little volume, the title of which meant "*Told in Norway*". There wasn't much in this book about social co-operation or labour but this work included selections from about forty of Norway's greatest authors. Each told some story about winter or summer, about mountain or fjord, about surf - bound little harbours where the struggle to live was hardest. It told stories of love and betrayal, of simple farm folk and even of witches and hags who made home life intolerable. There were stories of animals that seemed to me to beat anything that I had read and yet with all this variety and eloquence there was not a dull sentence throughout the book. Occasionally peasant language was used, at other times the voice was that of the University professor or the lawyer and pervading the whole series was that "stemning" of which I wrote, which is really the Song of Norway.

TWO FRIENDS

By "B.B."

ONE day in late April, when walking through my favourite wood, I heard at my feet a sudden raucous squawk and saw a fledgling rook crouched among the wood sorrel. His enormous mouth opened in a gape, as brilliant as an orchid, and I stooped and picked him up. Like all infants, his grip was powerful, the black scaly claws nipped round my right forefinger, and he cried aloud for food. Eighty feet above rocked the sticky cradles, and above them again, the cawing rooks hovered in the winds, swinging away round the wood, beating up again, poised in the spring breeze, looking down sideways at me, crying to their babies to keep low and out of sight.

This fledgling I held in my hand had fallen from the tree tops unharmed. His barely-formed wings had spread and acted as a parachute ; a rough landing, I expect, but the wood sorrel had softened the impact. Young birds rarely injure themselves when they fall out of the nest. Infant ducklings of the wild mallard have been known to leap to safety from the tower of a church, which strange nesting site an eccentric mother had chosen for her numerous family. Each year mallards choose pollared willows as nesting places and the babies have to "jump for it" a few minutes after they have left the shells.

Had I not chanced that way this rookling would have died from cold and hunger, for the parents would not feed him. Even if he survived until nightfall a prowling fox or hunting cat would have eaten him.

I was embarrassed with my foundling. Rooks possess enormous appetites, and all young birds are a "one man job" during the first ten days of fledgling life. Yet I could not ascend to those windy heights above and replace him in the nest, I could not leave him to death. Whether I wanted him or not he was now in my charge, so I put him in my pocket and took him home.

Small pieces of raw meat, a few chopped worms, pieces of bread soaked in scalded milk, this was his diet in those early days. His home was a rabbit hutch, which I had to clean out for him every day. There was never any trouble over feeding. That enormous mouth opened as soon as he saw me; I was simply another, very large, father rook.

It was not long before the hutch was too cramped for his needs, he fretted at the wires. I let him free. By then he could nearly fly, he used his wings when he jumped after me, a ragged black bundle of feathers which emitted an ear-splitting "cawk!" at intervals. After ten days he could fly well, but if I was not near, he sat on top of his wicker cage and kept an eye on the back door, or hopped about the stable yard. He soon got to know when I returned home, he could hear my car as it turned in at the gate, and he formed the habit of coming down the drive to meet me. Always I had to stop the car because he got under the wheels. There was nothing for it but to pull up, get out, and take him in on my shoulder until we reached the garage. His name, by the way, was Perce.

LADIES were not popular with Perce for he devised a torment for their benefit. Sneaking up behind with a sideways jumping movement he would nip silken ankles, the Achilles tendon being a favourite target for attack. The higher the victim jumped, and the louder the yell of anguish, the better was he pleased. After giving his nip he would spring back sideways and make a sound which was uncannily like a chuckle, but he never nipped *me*, he was my black shadow, my "familiar". If I walked in the garden he would come bounding after, if he had had his way I believe he would have shared my table and bed. Squatting on my heels I would talk to Perce, and look into his unfathomable eye, which seemed so fierce to other people. But when he looked at me he raised the lower membrane a little, which is the way a wild bird smiles, and the black feathers in his head ruffled up, another sign of pleasure. Soon, on meeting me, he would

bow courteously, until the serviceable pick-axe bill almost touched the ground, the wings and tail were spread, and to my utter amazement he crooned a sweet little song. I never knew until then that a rook was capable of making any other sound but a guttural croak or harsh caw. It is the song which has been sometimes heard by bird photographers in the hide, the "love croon" with which the male bird serenades his mate upon the nest, or at courtship times.

After a few weeks, Perce deserted his wicker cage, and took to roosting in a loose box, the top half of the door being left open so that he could fly in and out. He slept on top of a manger and, as soon as it was light, he came out and hopped about the yard on the look out for me.

ONE night in autumn I looked in vain for the black old villain awaiting me near the front gate. Uneasy, I drew up at the garage and peeped into the loose box, but the vacant manger told me he was not there, nor had he been seen since early afternoon. As he had full power of flight I was not unduly anxious, he was a match for any cat, and a dog, too, unless it was a terrier, which knows no fear. I searched the garden and grounds, calling to him. Usually, whenever I called him by name, he would immediately answer me with a caw, but no answer came.

Days passed, I thought then I should see him no more, some dark happening had occurred, unseen by any of us at the house.

Every evening on my return from business I searched the shrubberies, calling him. And then, on the fourth evening, I fancied I heard a faint reply from the stable, the door of which had been left ajar. I saw a dark draggled object crouched in the shadow. It was Perce. His right wing was mangled, he was near to death.

I carried him indoors, bathed his wing and strapped it up, though I could see he would never fly again. A wandering cur, or savage tom cat, had stolen upon him and done this deed; somehow he had struggled back to the stable. For a day or so he hovered between life and death and then began to mend. But as soon as he had fully recovered he would not go out of the stable yard, nor would he venture down the drive, some fearful memory held him back.

The following year, he picked up a mouse which had been killed by rat poison. He ate half of it. In the morning he was dead.

ONE expects any member of the crow family to be intelligent, but one does not expect to find real affection and wisdom in the smaller birds.

Yet the most lovable pet I have ever had was a bullfinch. How little do we realize that birds have personalities, that they differ one from another just as humans do! Only by rearing birds from the infant stage can we ever win affection, or obtain a real insight into their characters.

Bullfinches have a particular liking for blackthorn thickets bordering roads, and though usually shy and secretive birds they will, during the breeding season, frequent gardens and public highways.

In my part of the midlands the blackthorn forms dense thickets along the verges of country lanes, spreading out from the hedge, and in time growing right up to the edge of the road. This growth has to be kept in check, every dozen years or so, and when the bushes are cut down many bullfinches lose their broods. I happened to know of a nest in such a position not far from my home, I had watched the birds building, and had seen the hen begin to sit. But a few days later a gang of men set to work to cut down the bushes and I saw them drawing nearer to my hidden treasure. By bribery I persuaded the men to spare the bush where the hen was sitting, so as to enable the young to hatch, and, ten days after this occurred, I took away the entire nest and young, and the bush was cut down. It was the only chance I had to preserve the brood.

Placing the nest and young in a small basket I brought them home. They had shed the first woolly covering and their feathers had grown, though a few whisps still remained on their heads.

USUALLY fledglings of the finch tribe, after a few days old, will not open their mouths, and forcible feeding is necessary, for the first day or so, until they realize you

are bringing food. But with the bullfinch it is different. When the young are in the nest and show signs of fear they crouch as low as they can, and open their beaks wide, displaying a curious formation in the throat which some naturalists believe is designed to scare away inquisitive intruders, just as the larvæ of the poplar hawk moth rears up, when alarmed, and displays its strangely-marked head.

Here is your chance to feed the young of the bullfinch. With a small particle of boiled hemp and buckwheat I waited my opportunity, and popped the morsel in on the end of a match stick. As soon as the bird swallows, it realizes that it is being fed, it raises itself up in the nest, wagging its head and emitting a very faint and threadlike wheezing sound. The others, hearing this, also raise their heads, and open wide their mouths; in a few hours you can feed them all without difficulty.

It is interesting to notice that all the small birds which build in open situations are never vociferous in the nest, only those which build in holes in trees, banks, or walls, are noisy. This is a very wise provision of nature as prowling cats, rats, stoats, or weasels, or even birds of prey, might hear the sound of the young. Where the nest is in a hole or crevice it does not matter so much for a hasty retreat can be made if danger threatens.

The rearing of the small finches is a very arduous undertaking. They must be fed once an hour from 5.30 a.m. to dusk. Unless this is done the fledglings will die. Ignorant people will often give young wild birds their first feed four or five hours after dawn, and wonder why their charges do not survive. I used to vary the diet of my babies with natural wild seeds, especially the seeds of the sow thistle, which form the main diet of bullfinches in July.

Despite every care, however, two of the four died, but not through faulty diet. It was fright which killed them. By accident, a black sock fell down at the side of the cage, and every fledgling went frantic with fear, battering against the wires. Two fell back on the floor in a fit, I thought they had died there and then, but they recovered after a moment or so, and seemed none the worse. They had other fits, however, the next day, and I lost them both. The other two, whose nerves were stronger, suffered no ill effects.

IT may be wondered why this trivial accident should have caused their death. In the wild state, bullfinches are preyed upon by rats, which ascend the slender thorns and devour the young in the nest. These fledglings obviously thought the sudden appearance of the black sock was a rat, it was a clear case of inherited fear.

The two survivors went ahead and flourished, and I soon had them cracking seeds for themselves. I soaked rape, hemp, and canary seed, overnight to soften the husks, and after a little while the birds were cracking hard seed, and I knew that I had saved them.

The bullfinch has a very powerful bill and it is amusing to watch them cracking a hard round seed like a hemp seed. Their little tongues have a hollow in the top in which the seed rests. They hold it between the upper and lower mandible by keeping the tongue rigid, skilfully switching it from side to side until at last they get the seed on its edge and can split it asunder.

It was not long before I could open the cage door and let my little people free to fly about the room. They perched on the curtain rail, and on top of a grandfather clock, and from time to time made a tour of the ceiling. When they heard me coming they began to pipe, and as soon as I opened the door they flew down and perched on my shoulders, or my head.

After young bullfinches leave the nest, for the first two or three days, they pipe incessantly, almost mechanically. Most of the finches are noisy once they can fly, the most vociferous beng goldfinches who dog their parents wherever they go. The pipe of the young bullfinch has great carrying power, it can be heard in the woods from a distance of over a hundred yards. It is not the low pipe of the parent, but a continual "peeup! peeup!" uttered at four-second intervals.

My two little "bullies" soon got to know my step. They had a certain high-pitched

pipe which they never used for anyone else. As soon as my step was heard on the stairs they began to call, and if they were free in the room, they would both fly straight to me.

WHEN autumn came they began to grow their black bonnets, which are so neat and attractive, as though tied under the chin, and I was delighted to see, on picking up one of the birds and parting the flank feathers, that it was sprouting sheaves of pink-tipped quills. It was a cock, the other was a hen.

I have never been able to make up my mind whether the cock or the hen bullfinch is the more beautiful. Both have the snow white spot near the tail, as have most birds which frequent thick cover or dark places (stock dove, moorhen, jay, rock pigeon). Both have the black bonnet. The cock, however, has a light grey back and pink breast, that loveliest shade of wild-rose pink, whilst the hen has a more sober suit of lavender and brownish grey. Black tail, white spot, grey breast, darker browny-grey back, and black head; what charming restrained contrasts!

Soon after they had acquired their adult plumage a tragedy happened. We did not keep cats, but these animals were always prowling about the garden.

One day, as I mounted the stairs to the bird room, I heard no welcoming pipe. I opened the door, and as I did so, a cat sprang away from the wires. On the floor of the cage lay the headless body of Punch, the cock bullfinch, whilst Biddy was crouched in the corner with her beak agape in fear. She was unhurt, but it took a day or so before she got over the shock.

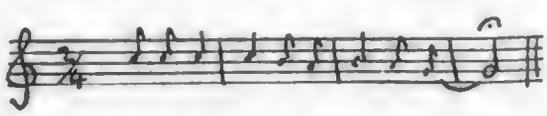
OF all the finch tribe the bullfinch is the most affectionate, they are supposed to pair for life, and they certainly keep their young with them from the end of the breeding season to pairing time the following year, and I do not know any other finch which does this. They keep in a little family party all through the winter, not flocking with others as do goldfinches, chaffinches, and greenfinches.

I was heavy at heart when I lost my pretty cock but soon Biddy bestowed upon me all her affection. If I was in the room she would not leave me. When I was writing she would come on the table and tweak away the paper or try to seize the pen nib. She would also take one corner of the paper and, pulling it to the side of the table, drop it over and watch its wavering descent to the ground.

With the coming of spring she began to think of nest building. As soon as I opened the door of the cage she would fly down to the carpet and begin to gather the hairs from the pile, tugging at them vigorously, like a thrush with a worm on a lawn. When she had made up a good-sized bundle of hairs she would fly across to me, wherever I was sitting, bend back her head, raise her white rump and with her little whiskered face pointed skywards, utter the twittering invitation which the hen uses to the cock bird when she requires his services. This she would do incessantly until I touched her little white rump with my finger. She would then throw the bundle of hairs, aside, and give herself a vigorous shake, after which she came close up to my collar and there cuddled down, warming me with her little body.

Birds never care to be handled, but she liked to perch on my finger, and sometimes would pull at my moustache, or at the short hairs on the back of my neck, a most agonizing performance.

It was not long before I taught her to pipe a tune. First thing in the morning I, or my father, would stand in front of the cage and whistle the following tune:—



One morning I heard her trying over the first three notes, in about six weeks she would pipe the complete tune. She had other notes as well, for the bullfinch has a sweet, though modest, song. She would bow, like Perce, with crest upraised and breast feathers extended, and copy, with surprising fidelity, a kissing sound which my father always made to her with his lips.

In about her fifth year she made a nest and laid several eggs, to all intents and purposes perfect and typical bullfinch's eggs, though, of course, unfertile.

She enjoyed her bath, which she had on the floor, in a saucer, usually drying herself by perching on my collar. As she grew older she became more lethargic, and took to sitting on the floor instead of a table or chair back. One evening my father entered the room, the light was bad, and Biddy was on the floor. To his horror he felt a faint crunch underfoot, and heard a flutter. He had trodden upon her!

He picked her up and summoned me. I was heart broken.

She was not dead, nor, miraculous as it may seem, had she sustained any internal injury, but her little leg was broken, a "green" fracture, half way up. I procured the quill of a hen's feather and, slitting it down, made a little splint, binding it securely with cotton. She hobbled about with this for a week or more and then we cut the binding. The leg healed beautifully and was as straight as the other.

When she was eight years old she was still full of life and would pipe her little tune whenever she heard me coming, and would, no doubt, have reached a ripe old age, if another accident had not befallen her. Again she was sitting on the floor, again my father entered the room, again there was a faint crunch.

This time it was all over. My little darling was gone.

I felt the loss of this bird more than I could have believed possible; I grieved as much as if I had lost a human relation. This may seem stupid to many people who know nothing of birds and their ways, but such was the case, it was a real bereavement which took over a year to heal.

BIDDY had led a happy life and certainly enjoyed a much longer one than if she had been in her natural state. She had never known any of her wild companions, nor the wonder of that other green world outside, her true inheritance. Yet, had I turned her adrift as soon as she could fly, she would not have survived. I once reared another orphan, a goldfinch (not a particularly lovable or intelligent bird) but the day after I let it go I found its body on the drive. A cat had stalked and caught it.

Biddy regarded her cage as her home, the door was always open, to it she retired at night, or when she wanted food or rest. The bonds of captivity were never irksome, she had care and affection, and was guarded from the dangers of the outdoor world.

I have often wondered how long she would have lived (I believe sparrows have been kept in captivity for fourteen years. This seems a tremendous span compared to the life of a dog or a cat).

I have had other pets, I have one now, a wild mallard drake, who, if he lived with me in my house, and could always be by my side, would possibly be as affectionate as my little bullfinch, for wild ducks are most intelligent.

I hatched him under a hen, from an egg which I found in a deserted nest, and he has been with me for three years now. He allows himself to be picked up, we hold conversations and talk to each other with our eyes, but it is Biddy who will ever hold my deepest affection. It may seem strange to some that affection can exist between a man and a minute hot-blooded bird whose brain is so small.

Her grave is in the centre of my rose garden, where there is a circle of grass. I planted snowdrops around it which bloom each spring, though the delicate bones have long been dust.

NOTES FROM OVERSEAS

IN view of the appointment of M. Vyshinsky to succeed M. Molotov as Russian Foreign Minister a brief outline of his career may not be without interest. He was born at Odessa, then the most cosmopolitan city in Russia, in 1883, but he spent his earlier years in Baku, where he joined the Socialist party at the age of nineteen. He took part, as a Menshevik, in the revolutionary disturbances in 1905, and for his activities he spent a year in prison. This seems to have cured M. Vyshinsky of any further desire to play the *rôle* of a politician, and on his release he went to Kiev to study law. He graduated somewhat late, at the age of thirty, but was so far trusted by the Tsarist authorities that he was appointed a deputy judge in the Moscow area.

M. Vyshinsky, doubtless mindful of what had happened to him twelve years before, remained inactive during the Russian Revolution in 1917, but the new regime was desperately short of trained lawyers, and Lenin soon singled him out for promotion in spite of the fact that he was a Menshevik. Accordingly, M. Vyshinsky was appointed to the Chair of Criminal Law at Moscow University, and from 1923-25 he was Prosecutor of the Soviet Supreme Court. From then his rise was rapid, until in 1935 he became Chief Prosecutor of the U.S.S.R. From 1940-46 he was First Deputy to the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, and from March, 1946, until his new appointment last month he was Deputy Foreign Minister for general questions, and also Chairman of the Legal Commission attached to the Supreme Soviet. It will thus be seen that the new Russian Foreign Minister is primarily a lawyer, not a politician, and in fact he did not become a Bolshevik until three years after the Russian Revolution.

DURING the past few weeks the Russian whip has been cracked most effectively over those who write or think in Czecho-Slovakia. All publishing houses were nationalized three years ago, but now the control of the written word has been carried a stage further. Membership of the Writers' Union is obligatory for all authors, including novelists, and new writers must serve an apprenticeship, after which the Union pronounces on their qualifications. Novelists must "go to the people", and for this purpose the country has been divided into districts, each of which has a "literary patron" selected from reliable writers of fiction. This unhappy individual has to visit his district regularly, to address meetings, and to listen to criticisms of his books from the local factory-workers. Nor are the critics by any means exempt from regimentation, for they are under obligation to comment on the degree of Socialist orientation to be found in the books they review.

These measures have already begun to have their effect, and it is interesting to note that Mr. Bernard Shaw has been an early victim. Two monographs on him, one by Mr. Hesketh Pearson and the other by a Czech, have been condemned. The objection to Mr. Pearson's work was on the ground that it did not take sufficiently into consideration the state of society when Mr. Shaw began his literary career, nor make his political position clear; while the Czech author was rejected because his "political outlook is unsound since, at the very beginning of his book, he states that the victory of the Labour Party in the General Election was tantamount to the victory of Socialism in Great Britain".

SIGNS are not wanting that the summer months are going to witness a determined attempt on the part of the Kremlin to crush Marshal Tito before his example becomes infectious in the other countries behind the Iron Curtain. The recent trials in Hungary and Bulgaria throw a vivid light on the urgency of the situation, for the need to strike terror into the hearts of all opponents must have been weighed very carefully against the undesirability of further alienating opinion in the West, particularly

in the United States. It would now appear that all outward opposition in the satellite states, apart from the partizans in the forests and mountains, has been silenced, and that the way is now clear for the offensive against Marshal Tito himself.

That this will take the shape of actual war seems unlikely, for the risk of such a conflict spreading would be considerable, and Russia is not yet ready for hostilities on an extended scale. What is more likely is that every effort will be made to accentuate Marshal Tito's internal difficulties until they become insuperable, and his regime is overthrown. Clearly Sofia is to be called upon to play an important part in this scheme, and the plans for the "Big Bulgaria" of San Stefano days have been taken out of their pigeon-hole in the Russian Foreign Office. Regimes may come and go, but the Russian policy of aggrandizement in the Balkans by using Belgrade and Sofia alternately remains unchanged. It is to be hoped that some relief will be experienced by the sorely-tried Greeks in consequence of these quarrels among the barbarians on their frontier.

NEARER home, the Irish problem seems to have reached an *impasse*. The elections in Northern Ireland have greatly strengthened the position of the Government there, so that it would appear impossible to effect any change by constitutional means; on the other hand, Mr. Costello has repudiated any desire to alter the *status quo* by force. In the exchange of verbal arguments Eire would seem to have had the better of it of late. Belfast says to Dublin, if you retain the King and the Imperial connection, we are prepared to work with you; to which Dublin replies, we promised all that and a great deal more in the years immediately preceding the First World War, yet you armed against us. This is all good fooling, as long as nobody takes it too seriously, but in actual fact it does not get anybody anywhere.

The real danger lies not in any overt act on the part of the Governments in Dublin or Belfast, but in something resembling a Jameson Raid into Tyrone and Fermanagh on the part of the more extreme elements in the I.R.A., who would in that case have the active support of a majority of the local population. In these circumstances it is by no means improbable that the Ulster Constabulary might prove unable to deal with the disturbance, and that British troops might thus become involved. The tragedy is that there are several theoretically satisfactory solutions of the problem, but none of them is in the least likely to prove acceptable to the two parties to the dispute. Meanwhile, the risk of an "incident" increases every day.

MONTE CASSINO

By FRIDD von SENGER und ETTERLIN

THERE is surely no one, certainly no Christian, who does not regret the destruction of the Monte Cassino monastery during the Italian campaign, early in 1944. Apart from places in the Holy Land and from Rome itself there was hardly anywhere more venerable to Christianity than the Monastery of Monte Cassino. Although not actually the place where St. Benedict founded the Order of Benedictines, Monte Cassino was the first model of a monastery of essentially Western and Benedictine monasticism. The actual buildings were not, of course, the original ones, for most of them dated from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. But on that site Monte Cassino Monastery existed in spite of the vissicitudes of fourteen centuries as the model intended by St. Benedict. Its situation was incomparable, high above the town of Cassino and dominating not only the Liri, Gari and Rapido river valleys but also a large part of the surrounding mountain country both towards the Tyrrhenian Sea and the Abbruzzi in the centre of Italy. No doubt this dominating position was chosen by the founder as an example for other monasteries, and the Benedictines have adhered faithfully to this tradition, choosing always beautiful environs around a monastic centre.

By chance the 14th Panzer Korps, which I took over at the end of October 1943, had had its Headquarters located in Cassino as early as Summer 1943, before the Sicilian landings. My predecessor had already established friendly relations both with the convent and with the inhabitants of the town. After the Sicilian campaign, where I had been in command of the German forces, I stopped at Cassino on my way to Rome, to pay a visit to the venerable old Abbot Diamare, who was both Abbot of the Monastery and in this capacity also bishop of the diocese of Cassino. I did not foresee at the time of this visit what an important part this Monastery would play in my life a few months later.

When I took over command of the sector the harder fighting was just beginning, for I intended to hold the *Bernard Line* (called by the Allies the *Winter Line*) for as long as possible. The Allied infantry had the convent in view from the time they reached San Pietro, but the difficult terrain and the German defences limited their further advance to a few miles in ten weeks, so that

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The author of this account of the destruction by the Allies of the historic Benedictine Monastery of Monte Cassino in February, 1944, one-time Rhodes scholar at Oxford, was the commander of the German 14th Panzer Korps in the Cassino Sector of the Italian Front from 1943. Although he served both in France and in Russia, General von Senger und Etterlin spent most of the war years in Italy. He was the German representative on the Italo-French Armistice Commission from 1940 to 1942. After the liquidation of the Stalingrad salient he returned to Italy to command the German forces in Sicily, Corsica and ultimately at Cassino. In 1945, when the Germans in Northern Italy surrendered to the Allies, von Senger und Etterlin was appointed German representative with General Mark Clarke's 15th Army Group.

Von Senger und Etterlin was in no way sympathetic with Nazi ideology. On the other hand, he was a loyal German citizen and soldier. Of his sincerity as a Christian there can be no doubt. From these facts, and from the ample internal evidence to be found in his article, readers may judge whether his story is true or false. To those who still believe that "all Germans are bad Germans" there can be but one answer. But the more fair-minded may be slower in forming a decision. At all events, whatever the conclusion reached, we believe readers will agree that this article is of immense historical importance, the more so because the Allied commanders have not so far produced any substantial evidence to contradict von Senger und Etterlin.

EDITOR.

they did not come to the outskirts of Cassino town until the beginning of 1944.

I WISH to make it clear at this point that after it became part of the battle-area Field-Marshal Kesselring had given express orders that no German soldier should enter the Monastery, so as to avoid giving the Allies any pretext for bombing or shelling the place. I cannot testify personally that this decision was communicated to the Allies but I am certain that the Vatican found means to do so, since it was directly interested in the fate of Monte Cassino. Not only did Field-Marshal Kesselring prohibit German soldiers from entering the Monastery, but he also placed a guard at the entrance gate to ensure that his orders were carried out. The Abbot himself and his monks have borne evidence that the neutrality of the Monastery was never infringed by any German soldier; it was also observed by the Allies who neither shelled nor bombed it until the final bomdardment of 15th February, 1944, when it was destroyed.*

When I stated that these men were witnesses that no German soldier ever entered the Monastery after it had become part of the battle-line, I should mention one exception. On Christmas Day 1943, I attended Mass in the Monastery, which was celebrated by the Abbot in the crypt among a couple of hundred refugees who had found shelter in this sanctuary. When entering the gate I saw the barrage-fire of several hundred guns of both belligerents at my feet, but I did not study the view from any of the windows of the convent. I inquired whether there were any complaints of the behaviour of either side and was assured that there were none. I was afterwards offered breakfast and left again.

Subsequent to the bombing one of the monks informed me that they had been warned the day before the assault by a message sent over by a shell which exploded near the Monastery. I cannot personally vouch for this fact, as it became known to me only after the event. But it would not have been possible in any case to evacuate the monks and some hundreds of homeless people who had sought refuge in the Monastery without a local armistice.†

To a certain extent the Allied decision to destroy the Monastery can be understood. I do not think that there was a recognized agreement as to the neutrality of the Monastery between the belligerents. I rather think it was a personal decision on the part of the German commander, Field-Marshal Kesselring. The Allies had suffered heavy losses in their uninterrupted attempts to break through and open the road to Rome. Anyone who has led troops in battle knows the psychology of the fighting-man, whatever his nationality, when faced with an obstacle. He is reluctant to bleed and die or to be withheld from success merely to preserve some building. Furthermore, the Allied leaders may have mistrusted the Germans whose government certainly did not warrant any blind faith in its pronouncements and promises. They may even have distrusted assertions of the Vatican regarding the behaviour of the German troops and their respect for the neutrality of the Monastery; perhaps the British and Americans considered any such assertions to be a pious fake invented in order to save Monte Cassino. I do not.

What I do know is that, by a tragic accident, the bombing of the Monastery had the very opposite effect to what was intended. For now it was thrown open to the Germans who occupied it immediately, as it formed

*The Allied leaders have produced little concrete evidence to the contrary. In his "*Report to the Combined Chiefs of Staff on the Italian Campaign, 8th January to 10th May*, 1944", the Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean, General Maitland Wilson, states baldly:

"The Cassino Monastery, *the buildings of which the enemy had occupied and fortified*, dominated all the approaches to the town and to Highway 6, and formed the pivot on which the German defensive system was based . . . One hundred and forty-two Fortress bombers dropped 287 tons of 500 lb. general-purpose bombs and 66½ tons of 100 lb. incendiaries, followed by 47 B-25's and 40 B-26's which dropped another 100 tons of H.E. bombs. The Monastery buildings were wrecked and breaches were made in the outer walls; but, because of the great thickness of these walls, the bombs did not breach them from top to bottom."

†General Maitland Wilson does not appear to have been aware of this. In his *Report* he wrote, "*After the Monks had been warned of our intention to destroy the Monastery, supporting artillery and Air Forces proceeded to carry out their missions*".

the best strong-point in the threatened sector. It had, indeed, become a far finer defence position than it would have been before its destruction, because as anyone who has had experience in street fighting—as at Stalingrad or at Cassino—is aware, rubble heaped upon basements and cellars form defences greatly superior to houses. Houses must be demolished in order to be converted from mouse-traps into bastions of defence. So it happened that at a later stage, when the Allied infantry had driven a deep wedge between Monte Cassino and the town, they were compelled to withdraw because they were enfiladed by the many batteries concealed in the ruins of the destroyed Monastery.

WHEN the Monastery was destroyed the eighty-two-years-old Abbot formed a procession of his monks and such refugees as would join them. They were preceded by a monk bearing a crucifix and had to walk through the barrage of fire. The procession was unable to take the normal road to the Via Casilina as this was too exposed to shelling. They took the way of the hills towards Monte Cairo and descended into the valley somewhere near Piedimonte. I had the Abbot picked up there by car and brought to my Headquarters which a few days previously had moved from Roccasecca to Castelmassimo, to the north of Frosinone. I lodged the venerable old priest, who was accompanied by a solitary monk-companion, for one night.

While the Abbot was my guest I received orders from the German High Command to induce him to make a radio-statement regarding the attitude of the German troops and their respect for the neutrality of the Monastery. I decided to comply, as the destruction of the Monastery was an event of historic importance in which my personal honour as a soldier and as a Christian was involved. After a conversation with his companion the Abbot agreed, and we conducted a dialogue into the microphone in which the Abbot went even further than I had intended, complaining of the deplorable ruin and destruction of many valuable and irreparable works of art. After the broadcast I had him taken by car to Rome, appointing an officer to deliver him safely to Sant' Anselmo, where he informed me he wished to go. Sant' Anselmo on the Aventino is the centre of the Benedictine Order. It is of comparatively modern construction, since the Benedictines, unlike other Orders, did not have a general of the order until recent times. In 1944, the chair of the Abbot-Primate was occupied by Abbot Fidelis von Stotzingen, a fellow-countryman of mine, coming from that part of Germany near Lake Constance where my own home is. I spent many an hour with him in those months of trouble and anxiety and always remember him with deference as a fatherly spiritual friend.

MY plan to convey the Abbot of Monte Cassino safely to Sant' Anselmo was thwarted. On the road to Rome the car was waylaid by agents of Goebbels, the Propaganda Minister. Goebbels had no intention of missing this excellent piece of propaganda and according to the methods of the *Führer Principle* meant to act with complete disregard of what others might do in the same line. The frightened old priest was accordingly brought to a radio station, kept waiting a long time without food, and finally induced to make another statement as prescribed by the radio columnists, which, however, was still in keeping with historical truth.

But this was not sufficient. Hitler's most stupid and most arrogant henchman, the Foreign Minister, also wanted his share of the cake. The statement which he required was shaped upon distinctly political propaganda lines. The unfortunate old priest at last broke down, refused to make any more statements and asked to be released, as he now understood that he was no longer a protected guest but a prisoner. It was late in the day when my officer could escort the Abbot safely to Sant' Anselmo, return to my Headquarters and, shocked by his impressions, make his report to me.

On one further occasion I saw the two old Abbots, when I attended Maundy Thursday ceremonies at Sant' Anselmo and was afterwards invited to breakfast by the Abbot-Primate. Now both priests are dead.

Theatre

IN SEARCH OF A PLAY

HUBERT GRIFFITH

THE HUMAN TOUCH. By J. Lee-Thompson and Dudley Leslie. *Savoy.*

CALIGULA. By Alfred Camus. *Embassy.*

DARK OF THE MOON. By Howard Richardson and William Berney. *Lyric, Hammersmith.*

ONCE in a while it is salutary for a critic to cast his eye down a list of London playbills and to ask himself quite seriously *which* of the current attractions he would recommend a friend—possibly a near friend or even a dear friend—to spend an honestly-turned sixpence on.

It need not necessarily be a play that the critic himself has devoted particular attention to. This may have been because the play in question (dull in itself) has indicated some new trend or experiment in drama, and was, for this, given detailed examination; or contained a single subtle performance that the critic thought worthy of recognition—or for any of half-a-dozen other and different reasons.

But a "friend" is a different matter. The critic must be normally conscientious towards his reading public (and is)—but he can reckon that comparatively few of them will bother to waste a tuppenny-ha'penny stamp on expostulation with him through the post if his judgment has led them astray. A "friend", on the contrary, can be furiously on the telephone to him next morning—asking, with imprecations, why he has been led to spend much money on expensive seats—or valuable time queueing for cheaper seats—for the two hours or so of drivel that the critic has inflicted on him. It is a solemn thought! The situation has occurred before—and will no doubt occur again.

CASTING my eye down the present list, it seems to me quite honestly that little of dramatic importance—or even of gay and good-tempered nonsense—has occurred recently. (I except from this one extremely fine play, on the life of James Young Simpson, *The Human Touch*, now running at the Savoy. But as the large majority of my colleagues disagreed with me about this, I will have to come back and deal with it in detail in a minute.)

There have been two light comedies that I have not seen, and therefore will not attempt to pass judgment on—*Sweethearts and Wives* at Wyndham's, with Patricia Burke and Miss Jessie Matthews (guarantees of making a comedy amusing if a comedy can be amusing); and a translation from the French, *Love's a Funny Thing*, at the Ambassadors' which apparently no producer has thought it worth while to put his name to—for no name of "producer" or "stage-director" or what-you-will, in this connection appears on the programme. (Both these plays have now been hastily withdrawn.)

There has been a gloomy piece of symbolism, *Dark of the Moon*, by two young American authors, at the Lyric, Hammersmith—I will not say, at "that home of lost causes", for the experimental productions at the Lyric, Hammersmith, have often been of a very promising and exciting nature indeed. But in this case the semi-simian characters, taken from those backwoods of American civilization the Smoky Mountains—where African witch-magic and doctrine seem to be taken as accepted fact—were of almost no human interest whatever.

Likewise, M. Alfred Camus' *Caligula*, at the Embassy, Swiss Cottage. This small and enterprising outlying theatre is now, in the mood of its present management, open to give a chance to almost anything. But M. Camus' piece, if I mistake it not, is bound up with "Existentialism". It deals, through the young Emperor Caligula, with the problem of the personality that realizes itself through the infliction of pain and insult—with the problem of the man who thinks

himself so much above his contemporaries that he can only live by dominating them—with the problem of the superman.

But in the medium of M. Camus' long-winded and laborious speeches—the superman becomes only the super-bore.

(This is only partly—or only infinitesimally—due to the fact that Caligula is played by a young Greek actor, speaking English with immense fluency, but with evidence in every syllable of foreign accent, and directed by a Greek producer. Why are there so many instances of the same sort of thing to-day on the London stage? The wonderful part of Gregers Werler, in Ibsen's *The Wild Duck*, is being played at the moment in London by Mr. Anton Walbrook, an actor of talent who though he has been resident on our shores for ten years, and has made a considerable stage and film-reputation for himself in that time, does not seem to have payed us the compliment of getting a better English accent for himself than he could have acquired in his first day at Dover. It goes without saying that the equally wonderful part of Gina Ekdal, the little semi-blind girl, is played by Miss Mai Zetterling, with a Scandinavian accent you could cut with a knife—the sort of thing that one goes to the internationally-minded Academy Cinema to listen to . . . Please forgive me if I seem to be getting Chauvenistic in these matters.

If the young Greek actor, Mr. Michael Yannis, had had a better play to bring to us, I would probably have taken off my hat to him for his initiative. As it was, I thought the thing not only drivel, but pretentious drivel which is a hundred times worse.)

We revert to the immediate question of "what to go and see in London".

Among recent and serious plays I would say that the play about the first great practitioner of anæsthetics, Sir James Young Simpson, *The Human Touch*, stands out head and shoulders among all the rest.

It is not a "great" play in itself—by high imaginative and generalized standards. I don't think that is even quite as good as Drinkwater's *Abraham Lincoln* (which many Americans faulted and dismissed for many minor reasons).

But it is actual and factual. And what my distinguished colleagues (with the notable exceptions of Mr. Beverley Baxter, M.P. and Mr. Harold Hobson of the *Sunday Times*) found to dislike about it simply passes my understanding.

To explain my own appreciation of it I will, as they say in schoolboys' examinations, "state my reasons and draw a map".

In the first place, the play is about something that actually happened—which nine times out of ten, and unless we are going into the imaginative ecstasies of such a play as *The Tempest*, is better than being about something that didn't happen.

Moreover, what actually happened produced dramatic conflict of the highest class. A brilliant young Edinburgh physician, sickened at the agonies that he saw at the operating-table (period, the 1840's) and in the confinement-ward, determined to introduce the newly-discovered anæsthetic of chloroform. Against him he had almost the entire medical profession of the time—(a) because it was an innovation; and (b) because there were serious dangers about its administration in its experimental stage. (These dangers are not minimized but are, rather, stressed in the Savoy play.)

Against him he also had an extremely vocal section of the Church of his time, that put up spokesmen to declare that "the deep groans of a woman in childbirth were as incense to the Lord", and much else of the same sort. (It remained for an advocate of chloroform—not Simpson himself, I believe, as at the Savoy—to play off the Scriptures against the Scriptures by reminding his hearers that God had "put Adam into a deep sleep" before the extraction of Eve from his side, the first recorded major surgical operation.

The effect of this theological argument on the Victorian mind was of course profound. Still more so, as a cynical observer might remark, that for her next confinement Queen Victoria decided to undergo the benefits of anæsthesia herself. . . .)

Now here surely, expressed even in terms of comparatively simple playwrighting, with the emotional overtones left out, was the stuff of genuine and important drama? And

yet most of my colleagues, who sat through the crude vulgarities of the farce *Little Lambs Eat Ivy* (where the main joke throughout its three acts is that a woman is having a baby upstairs) without a blush—dismiss the James Young Simpson play with notices that would, if they could, have killed it.

I would add that the play is beautifully acted and produced. Young Mr. Alec Guinness has been given many chances in recent seasons at the Old Vic., and, according to me, has never yet quite brought them off. He has remained "a rising young actor"—who still had considerably further to rise. Now, in the James Young Simpson part, he takes a fine chance finely. His assistant, a young actor hitherto completely unknown to me, Mr. John Gregson, is so good, in a smaller so-called "supporting part", that I can only say that I would be only too glad to have him in any future play of mine—the acid test for a critic who has also been a playwright. Miss Sophie Stewart lends a strangely personal warmth and radiance to the otherwise undistinguished part of the chief character's wife.

Mr. Peter Ashmore's production had the subtle merit of unobtrusiveness. Everyone in the cast was aided, and no one was hindered. I ask you to look, as an example, at the lighting of the last act—the great discussion scene, when the heads of the medical profession in Edinburgh decide whether they are or are not to certify Dr. James Young Simpson as insane. The central group sits in its own quietly informative pool of light. But both to the right and left of the central committee sit the witnesses about to be called—"indicated" to the audience in their full relative importance to the main scene, but not yet obtruded upon it. Probably not one in a hundred of the audience noted this curious brilliance of effect in helping the "build-up" of the play.

But it is by these subtle and almost unnoticed touches that a true producer does his work.

Gentlemen, I have tried to do one of the most difficult things in the world—not only to state that a play is a good one, but to indicate *why* it is a good one—in other words, to "state one's reasons and draw a map".

You may not be impressed—but at least give my experience the benefit of the doubt.

AS regards lighter entertainment, if you feel that way inclined—I am afraid that I will have to go back some way in the theatrical calendar, to a play that has already been running many hundreds of nights, to an almost idiotic farce called *The Happiest Days of Your Life*, at the Apollo Theatre. It employs all the jokes that may legitimately be used—and even more than the jokes that may legitimately be used—when, owing to the exigences of the post-war situation, a boys' boarding-school is temporarily billeted on a girls' boarding-school. (You hardly know at the end which is which; and, as a crowning departmental blunder of the Ministry of Education a boarding-school "for backward boys and forward girls" seems to have been foisted on them both.)

But if you are in an irresponsible mood, and, as was occasionally your great predecessor, Dr. Johnson, "out for a frolic", I can assure you that it is riotously funny.

ALEXANDRA DANILOVA, probably the greatest dancer of her generation, returned as a guest-artist to Covent Garden in the last few days, in *Giselle*, the *Boutique Fantasque*, and several other of her well-known parts. It will be for the London public to decide whether her grace, graciousness, and incomparable sense of comedy, have grown any less during her ten-year stay in America.

CHARLES JAMES FOX
after the Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

FREDERICK NORTH, LORD GUILFORD
after the Portrait by Dance

LORD NORTH AND MR. FOX

By KENNETH HARE

(The Revolt of the American Colonies from a contemporary News-sheet)

IN the seventeen-hundreds when roads were bad and travel both tedious and costly, a visit to London was in the nature of an expedition. For many a country squire London was a place to be seen but once or twice in a lifetime. "Town" for him was the capital city of his county, and when winter had reduced farming upon his estate to such routine operations as hedging, ditching, and the feeding of stock, it is here that he would migrate for a few months with his family, go into residence and keep the season. There would be assemblies, routs and ridottos after the fashion of London; and as many country gentlemen had made the world-tour, and had time both for the

classics and their friends, there was commonly a higher level of culture in these towns than we associate to-day with the word "provincial". This showed itself amongst other things in the news-sheets which were often admirably written and extremely well informed.

I had the good luck the other day to light upon a series of numbers of *The Glocester Journal* which not only publishes news-letters from the neighbouring counties, but reports of the parliamentary debates: all unfortunately very much abridged. The print is minute; either our Georgian ancestors enjoyed stronger eyesight than ourselves, or the diminutive type testifies to the editor's determination to pack as much matter as possible into his single large sheet, folded so as to make four pages.

We are in the early days of the American War of Independence, and a "King's ship" has intercepted a packet of letters for "Mr. Washington", for distribution amongst his troops by his Postmaster-General. A private writes: "We have a report that Bob McKenzie was killed at Bunker's Hill, is it true? I had a great friendship for him formerly, but can't help saying I shall be glad to hear the news confirmed."

A SHORT extract now from a letter from Benedict Arnold, commonly reckoned after Washington himself and Greene, the greatest American general of the war. The briefest note upon this commander would appear *ad rem*. He was wounded in the left leg at Quebec, and again in the same leg when the bone was shattered above the knee, at the second battle of Freeman's Farm. The fellow who shot him was one of George the Third's German troopers who, although himself wounded, discharged his piece whilst lying on the ground. One of Arnold's men dashed forward to bayonet the German and revenge his senior officer, but although prostrate himself with his wound, Arnold shouted: "For God's sake, don't hurt him; he's a fine fellow!" an entreaty which in view of the circumstances in which it was uttered, may rank with the famous words of Sir Philip Sidney. The German's life was spared. Later to the consternation of the Americans, Arnold changed sides, plotted to give up the fort of West Point on the Hudson—the "Gibraltar of America"—to the English general, Sir Henry Clinton, came over to the British, and served with the rank of Brigadier against his former comrades. Much has been urged in extenuation of conduct so extraordinary. He had suffered himself to become embittered by the ingratitude of Congress; he had allowed a pretty wife, a Tory with strong pro-British interests, to sway his better judgment. He was perhaps such another character as Shakespeare's "false, fleeting, perjured Clarence", endowered with the same instability, yet with the same high courage, and impulsive chivalrous nature. But as *The Glocester Journal* makes abundantly clear, many Americans took up arms on the British side, so the charitable may suppose, if they wish, that Arnold did not regard himself as a traitor, but as a loyalist reverting from a false to a true allegiance.

The Glocester Journal, 13th May, 1775.

"From a letter from General Arnold, written about the latter end of January last.

"I have pleasure in informing you that my wound is in so fair-way that I expect to be on my legs in a fortnight. Notwithstanding our misfortune we have continued the blockade successfully; though the enemy (still the British) are double our number, they have not dared to show themselves without the walls. I expect General Wooster from Montreal to take the command here; but a council of war thought his presence absolutely necessary there, so that I have had a most fatiguing time of it. The continual agitation of mind I have been in has, in great measure, retarded the healing of my wound."

FEELING runs high in the Bunker's Hill year, and here is an ugly example of mob violence. The date is 10th April, 1775, and *The Glocester Journal* is quoting *The New York Gazette*:—"Dr. Clark of Reading, a gentleman distinguished by a firm attachment to the King and the constitution, was seized in the township of Hertford, and carried upon a rail about the parish, under

which cruelty he several times fainted; when dismissed by his tormentors, and examined by Dr. Tidmarsh, he was found to be injured in a manner unfit for description. The Doctor was menaced with the same treatment for his humanity to the sufferer, whose only crime was speaking in terms of respect of the King and his government."

Was there any case whatever for taxing the colonists, and if so, what was it? To answer this question, we must glance back a little. In 1759—fifteen years before the "Boston Tea-party"—Ferdinand, Duke of Brunswick, with an army of mixed British and Hanoverian troops, had defeated the French at Minden. In the same year, Admiral Hawke had completely destroyed their fleet in Quiberon Bay. In India, too, war raged. After his glorious victory at Plassey in 1757, Robert Clive had been consolidating that mighty conglomeration of warring sects and races under the British Crown. All this had cost a fabulous sum. Had Britain gone down in the conflict with France, the invasion of the American colonies by the French would have followed inevitably. Why then did the French assist the colonists against ourselves? That question is easily answered. It was but the continuation of the war against us; not love for America, but fear of Britain dictated that move. The money for which the taxes were levied was required as a common defence fund, to be employed indifferently for the good of Great Britain and the colonies alike. Nor was the sum demanded excessive. There was no question of exploitation in the high Roman style. As reported in *The Glocester Journal*, Lord North reminded the House: "Every person in Britain, on an average, contributed at the rate of twenty-five shillings per head, whereas the American did not contribute six shillings." Had any hostile Power invaded or even threatened the colonies, an appeal to England to send troops to assist in their defence, would have met with an immediate and generous response; the money that it was proposed to raise by taxation was in the nature of an insurance. That King George's government did not propose to couple taxation with representation, was manifestly unjust; but at this time it was very far from being universally reckoned so. At the dawn of the industrial era, the developing towns of the north of England sent no members to Parliament. On the other hand, no one to-day will deny that the methods taken to raise the taxes were exceedingly ill advised. Had the whole principle of compulsory taxation been formally abolished, an appeal for an unforced voluntary levy towards the common defence would perhaps have brought in more revenue than it was hoped to raise by compulsion. George the Third was stubborn but not tyrannical. A large party on both sides of the Atlantic hoped against hope that moderation and reason would prevail.

The Glocester Journal, 9th January, 1775, reporting a letter from Boston of 20th October, 1774.

"To the Hon. Peyton Randolph, Esq., one of the Delegates of the people of Virginia. . . .

"Sir, . . . It gives me pleasure that you are endeavouring at a cordial reconciliation with the mother country; which, from what has transpired, I have despaired of. Nobody wishes better success to such measures than myself. I have endeavoured to be a mediator, if I could establish a foundation to work upon, and have strongly urged it to people here. To pay for the tea (thrown overboard at the "tea party") and send a proper memorial to the King, would be a good beginning on their side, and give their friends the opportunity they seek to move in their support.

"I do not believe that menaces and unfriendly proceedings will have the effect which many conceive. The spirit of the British nation was high when I left England, and such measures will not abate it. But I should hope that decency and moderation here would create the same disposition at home; and I ardently wish that the common enemies of both may see, to their disappointment, that these disputes have terminated like quarrels of lovers and increased the affection which they ought to bear each other. I am, Sir, etc.

Thomas Gage."

AT home, in the House of Commons, Mr. Dunning of the Opposition, shows himself an advocate for moderation.

The Glocester Journal, 6th February, 1775.

"All representations from America contain the highest expressions of loyalty and duty to their sovereign. . . . The Americans are not in rebellion. . . . Conceiving themselves to be tyrannically used, and conceiving that the nature of their dependence upon the parliament of Great Britain was not well understood on either side of the water, in order to treat with this country upon such momentous points they convened a general congress. The deputies met in that congress came to resolutions declaratory of their ideas of submission to Great Britain, full of duty and allegiance to the King, and respect to Parliament. But all free countries have licentious subjects. . . . We must not search for proofs of rebellion among the American mobs and colony newspapers, which have actually been laid before us as state papers. . . . Not having mustered in arms, the Americans cannot, but by the utmost perversion of sense and expression, be denominated rebels."

Amongst those who exerted themselves to the utmost to save the situation, was the man whom Burke termed "the most brilliant and accomplished debater that the world ever saw", the fat, swarthy, bright-eyed, saturnine Mr. Fox. A pity his speech is not recorded verbatim !

The Glocester Journal, 6th February, 1775.

"Mr. Fox was eloquent to a degree that much exceeded the most sanguine expectations of his warmest friends. He spoke to the injustice, the inexpediency, and folly of the measure as it presented itself in a variety of striking lights; and predicted defeat on one side of the water, and ruin and deserved punishment on the other."—"The measure" was the sending of battleships and English soldiers to Boston. Fox spoke for "an hour and ten minutes".

Although seriously ill at the time, Burke came to the House to speak in favour of "Mr. Fox's amendment". What precisely the terms of his amendment were, this old news-sheet doesn't tell us: but doubtless the whole business was in every mouth at the time. By one vote only he failed to carry the day in the teeth of the king and his government. For Fox, the Ayes were 105; the Noes—in favour of Lord North—were 106; the latter was now free to send frigates and men to Boston. The weight of a wren's feather had turned the scale!

A STRIKING American parallel to this momentous debate in the Commons was furnished by that in Congress on the famous Fourth of July. The resolution for breaking with Britain being put to the vote, it was passed by the questionable majority of one: questionable because to avoid a stalemate, one of the members, Dickinson, consented to withdraw. Yet large tracts of country were still in favour of maintaining unity with the home country. Even now a reversal of policy at Westminster might have sufficed to reconcile all differences.

The Glocester Journal, 8th May, 1775.

"By a vessel arrived last Tuesday from North Carolina, we are informed that many hundreds of the inhabitants in the western counties of North Carolina have addressed his Excellency Governor Martin, professing the warmest allegiance to the King and his laws, declaring the greatest detestation of congresses and committees, and offering their service to take the field, and enlist under the Royal Standard as soon as called upon. . . ."

The Glocester Journal, Monday, 13th February, 1775.

"Monday's post, London. Saturday, 11th February.

"ASSOCIATION drawn up and entered into by the LOYALISTS of MASSACHUSETT'S-BAY, for their mutual Defence against the REBELS.

"Boston, 22nd December. We, the subscribers being fully sensible of the blessings of good government on the one hand, and convinced on the other hand of the evils and calamities attending on tyranny in all shapes, whether exercised by one or many; and having of late seen, with great grief and concern, the distressing effects of a dissolution of all government, whereby our lives, liberties and properties are

rendered precarious, and no longer under the protection of the law, and apprehending it to be our indisputable duty to use all lawful means in our power, for the defence of our persons and property, against all riotous and lawless violence, and to recover and secure the advantages which we are entitled to from the good and wholesome laws of the government, do hereby associate and mutually covenant and engage to end (? band) with each other as follows, viz.

"I. That we will, upon all occasions, with our lives and fortunes, stand by and assist each other in defence of his (*sic*) life, liberty and property, whenever the same shall be attacked or endangered by any bodies of men, riotously assembled upon any pretence, or under any authority not warranted by the laws of the land.

"II. That we will, upon all occasions, mutually support each other, in the free exercise and enjoyment of our undoubted right to liberty in eating, drinking, buying and selling, communing and acting what, with whom, and as we please, consistent with the laws of God and the King.

"III. That we will, to the utmost of our power, promote, encourage, and, when called to do it, enforce obedience to the rightful authority of our most gracious King George the Third and his laws.

"V. (? misprint for IV). That when the persons or property of any one of us shall be invaded or threatened by any committees, mobs, or unlawful assemblies, the others of us will, upon notice received, forthwith repair properly armed to the person on whom, or place where, such invasion or threatening shall be, and will to the utmost of our power defend such person and his property, and, if need be, will oppose and repel force by force.

"VI. (? misprint for V). That if any one of us shall unjustly and unlawfully be injured in his person or property, by any such assemblies as before mentioned, the others of us will unitedly demand, and, if in our power, compel the offenders, if known, to make full reparation and satisfaction for such injury, and, if all other means of security fail, we will have recourse to the natural law of retaliation.

"In witness of all which we hereunto subscribe our names, this day of ."

So much for those colonists who were opposed to any breach with the mother country. Now for those who were determined upon change. We are to witness the first steps towards the formation of a distinctively national American army.

The Glocester Journal, 27th February, 1775.

"Saturday's Post.

"America. Boston, 16th January.

"At a town meeting at Marblehead the 10th inst., legally convened, they came to several resolutions relative to raising a militia."—We are given the preamble—"Whereas a great part of the inhabitants of the town may soon be called forth, to assist in defending the charter and constitution of the province, as well as the rights and liberties of all America; and in order thereto, it is necessary that they should be properly disciplined, and instructed in the art of war.

" Resolved, That their pay per diem, be as follows: Private 2s.; Sergeant, Clerk, Drummer or Fife, 3s.; First Lieutenant, 4s. 8d.; Second ditto, 4s.; Captain, 6s. To attend three days in the week, and four hours in a day." But inflation was soon to bring down the value of the shilling—there were no dollars as yet—to something well-nigh valueless.

" Resolved, That the sum of 8001. be immediately raised, and be paid into the hands of Capt. James Mugford who is appointed Receiver and Paymaster for the militia."

"We light, in these yellowing leaves of the old Gloucester news-sheet, upon the pen-name 'Junius', which sufficed to mask from every species of ministerial snooper, the identity of a severe detractor of King George's government."

The Glocester Journal, 25th May, 1767.

"We are desired to make the following declaration in behalf of Junius, on which his opinion has been mistaken or misrepresented : ' Junius considers the right of taxing the colonies by an act of the British legislature, as a speculative right

merely; never to be exerted, nor ever to be renounced.' Though a heretic in ethics, as a mediator between factions Mr. Facing-both-ways is entitled to our very high regard! "

IN the light of subsequent knowledge, it is interesting to observe how even the shrewdest of political commentators may be very wide of the mark in forecasting future events.

The Glocester Journal, 15th May, 1775.

"Among the numberless bugbears set up to frighten us from asserting our rights over the refractory colonists, one in particular is the apprehension that France and Spain will assist them with arms, ammunition, money, and even officers and men if wanted. But no man who has the least knowledge of the country can be imposed upon by so extravagant a proposition. Whatever assistance the Spaniard brings must either be landed in our ports, for which they must first ask our consent, or must be conveyed from their own territories the other side of the Mississippi, across that rapid river, over several large and often dangerous lakes, through a chain of forts garrisoned by British troops, an immense tract of uncultivated country, and the habitations of many different tribes of savages, whose language and manners they are unacquainted with, and whose good-will they must purchase. Add to this the total want of all sorts of carriages, conveniences and even necessaries. The French are still less able to annoy us, for they have not a foot of land upon the whole continent. And besides all this, it cannot be supposed with any face of probability, that either the French or the Spaniards would assist the North Americans in setting up independent states in that part of the world, because the scheme, if attended with success, would teach their own colonists to do the like: it being well known that the America-French, and more especially the Spanish-Creoles, have a natural and inbred aversion to the governments of old France and old Spain, and wait only a favourable opportunity to revolt."

Nobody can deny that this is shrewdly reasoned but: *super nos Fortuna negotia curat!*

AS the events of the War of Independence recede ever more into the past, we Englishmen tend to associate Lord Cornwallis exclusively with that final surrender at Yorktown. He has others than that sad claim to figure in history! Let me anticipate a little.

The Glocester Journal, 16th October, 1780. Quoting *The London Gazette*. Lord Cornwallis is writing to Lord George Germain.

"Camden, 21st August, 1780.

" . . . At the dawn I made my last disposition, and formed the troops in the following order: the division on the right consisting of a small corps of light infantry, the 23rd and 33rd regiments, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Webster; the division on the left, consisting of the volunteers of Ireland, infantry of the legion and part of Lieutenant-Colonel Hamilton's North Carolina regiment, under the command of Lord Rawdon, with two six- and two three-pounders, which were commanded by Lieutenant McCleod. The 71st regiment, with two six-pounders, was formed as a reserve, one battalion in the rear of the division on the right, the other on that of the left, and the cavalry of the legion in the rear and, the country being woody, close to the 71st regiment, with orders to seize any opportunity that might offer to break the enemy's line, and be ready to protect our own, in case any corps should meet with a check.

"This disposition was just made when I perceived that the enemy, having likewise persisted in the resolution to fight, was formed in two lines opposite and near to us; and observing a movement on their left, which I supposed to be with an intention to make some alteration in their order, I directed Lieutenant-Colonel Webster to begin the attack, which was done with great vigour, and in a few minutes, the action was general along the whole front. It was at this time a dead calm, with a little haziness in the air, which, preventing the smoke from rising, occasioned so thick a

darkness, that it was difficult to see the effect of a very heavy and well supported fire on both sides. Our line continued to advance in good order, with the cool intrepidity of experienced British soldiers, keeping up a constant fire, or making use of the bayonet as opportunities offered; and after obstinate resistance during three-quarters of an hour, threw the enemy into total confusion, and forced them to give way in all quarters.

"At this instant I ordered the cavalry to complete the route (*sic*), which was performed with their usual promptitude and gallantry; and after doing great execution on the field of battle, they continued their pursuit to Hanging Rock, twenty-two miles from the place where the action happened; a number of colours and seven pieces of brass cannon (being all their artillery that were in the action) with all their ammunition-waggons were taken; between eight and nine hundred were killed, among that number Brigadier-General Gregory, and one thousand prisoners, many of them wounded, of which number were Major-General Baron de Kalb, since dead and Brigadier-General Rutherford."

By way of contrast, here from *The Glocester Journal* of 4th May, 1778, are extracts from a letter of three years later: the surrender of General Burgoyne—who was by no manner of means the "man who always came too late" of popular prejudice—as related by himself. This unique document was forwarded to *The Glocester Journal* by a correspondent who came by it "accidentally" but had "no kind of doubt of its authenticity".

Albany, 20th October, 1777

"If my letters of the beginning of September reached you, the events which succeeded will not appear extraordinary. That passing Hudson's River was putting the fate of the army upon a chance; but that the precision of my orders, the season of the year, and other circumstances of the time, made the steps unavoidable. I inclose to Lord Derby a copy of my despatches to Lord G. G. (George Germain) in order that it may be published by him in case the ministry should mangle or curtail any part of it in the *Gazette*. . . .

"I shall subjoin hereto extracts of my private letters to Lord G. and Lord North, and I do it to furnish you with means to defend your friend against the attacks that necessarily follow unsuccessful events. I expect ministerial ingratitude will be displayed (as in all countries and at all times is usual) to remove the blame from the orders to the execution. . . . Should such a return be made for the zeal, with which I have pursued their purposes, it will be the part of my friends to place their foundation of my defence on the principle and letter of my orders. It was the will of the state to risk a corps of troops for general purposes, it was no more the General's duty to decline proceeding upon motives of prudence, and upon speculation of consequences, than it would be justifiable in a sergeant, who has a forlorn hope at the storm of a breach, to recede because his own destruction was probable. . . . Is there a man that would have held me defensible had I left exertions untried in the circumstances I then was? . . . The contempt of my own army, the condemnation of government and the world, would have been the inevitable and deserved consequences of inaction: my head would have been answerable for it; and I should have left my friends (had any such remained) the painful task of defending disobedience to orders on cowardly principles—the utmost that malevolence can now say, will be, that I have been too bold. . . .

"Orders in the construction of which there was neither latitude nor alternative compelled me to lay by, of consequence, the general maxims of military reasoning upon securing a retreat. I twice fought, and once conquered double my numbers; I afterwards courted an action from more than quadruple my numbers with which I was invested; and at last with only three days provisions for the men upon a short allowance—without one particle of forage—the troops galled with a cannonading into all parts of their position and exhausted with watchfulness

of many days and nights under arms—the Germans dispirited and ready to club their arms at the first fire—under all these circumstances of distress—amongst all these causes of despair, I dictated terms of a convention which saves the army to the state. . . .

"As to myself I am exhausted in mind and body; the agitations of the one and the fatigues of the other are too much for me. An American winter (should that be my fate) will be decisive of my health—possibly of my life. To its last minutes be assured of the inviolable affection of

Your's
J. Burgoyne."

I RETURN to the early critical days, to Lord North and Mr. Fox.

The Glocester Journal, 27th February, 1775.

"Mr. Fox, in particular, charged him (Lord North) with being a heap of contradiction, a very mass of inconstancy, willing to adopt the most arbitary measures; but timid to such a degree as to be afraid to pursue the most simple and obvious. In fine as a composition of despotism without spirit or resolution, of the most notorious duplicity, wrapped up in threadbare professions of candour and moderation, and of the most unbounded lust for the emoluments of office." Such were the amenities of parliamentary debate when statesmen were scholars, and familiar with the things which Cicero had found to say about Catiline!

If only Lord North could have resented this treatment and sent his traducer a challenge! If only Mr. Fox could then have *winged* him in one of those *little affairs* on Putney Heath, even at this late hour, I fancy a halt might have been called to hostilities, for one doubts whether King George could have found another minister so pliant.

LITERATURE AND CRITICISM

Edited by HUGH KINGSMILL

FEARFUL SYMMETRY

DR. BLACKSTONE'S *English Blake*,* in his own words, presents that extraordinary figure as one whose writings "stand beside the Gita, the Upanishads and the *Tao Teh Ching* among the spiritual masterpieces of the world. In English literature", Dr. Blackstone goes on, "there is no one to compare him with after the mystical writers of the Middle Ages—Walter Hilton, Richard Rolle, and the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*. He has no pregenitor; and he founded no school. He stands quite alone as a prophet at the close of the materialistic eighteenth century and the opening of the mechanistic nineteenth century, proclaiming in a spiritual wilderness the doctrine of the eternal world".

It is indeed true that Blake is unique. If the *Prophetic Books* are, at any rate to the uninitiated, largely incomprehensible, the *Songs of Innocence* and the *Songs of Experience* contain some of the most exquisite and revealing lines ever written; and woven into the strange confusion of Blake's mental processes there are flashes of breath-taking clarity. What, for instance, could be expressed with greater lucidity than:

> "To the Eyes of a Miser a Guinea is far more beautiful than the Sun, & a bag worn with the use of Money has more beautiful proportions than a Vine filled with Grapes. The tree which moves some to tears of joy is in the Eyes of others only a Green thing which stands in the way. Some see Nature all Ridicule & Deformity, & by these I shall not regulate my proportions; and some scarce see Nature at all. But to the Eyes of the Man of Imagination, Nature is Imagination itself. As a man is, so he sees. As the Eye is formed, such are its Powers."

Or:

> " 'What', it will be Question'd, 'When the Sun rises, do you not see a round disk of fire somewhat like a Guinea?' O no, no, I see an Innumerable company of the Heavenly host crying, 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty'. I question not my Corporeal or Vegetative Eye any more than I would Question a Window concerning a Sight. I look thro' it & not with it."

As Dr. Blackstone indicates, there is little to be said about Blake's external life. He was born the son of a moderately prosperous shop-keeper; was apprenticed to an engraver, and, considering his eccentric, and sometimes wilful, behaviour, it must be considered an extraordinary circumstance that he dealt as satisfactorily as he did with the problem of earning a living. One has only to look at those extraordinary catalogues he prepared for exhibitions of his pictures to realize how little he was inclined to make any concessions to current conventions, or even to reason. Take for instance this:

> "The two pictures of Nelson and Pitt are compositions of a mythological cast, similar to those Apotheoses of Persian, Hindoo, and Egyptian Antiquity, which are still preserved on rude monuments, being copies from some stupendous originals now lost or perhaps buried till some happier age. The Artist having been taken in vision into the ancient republics, monarchies, and patriarchates of Asia has seen those wonderful

* *English Blake* by Bernard Blackstone. *Cambridge University. 25s. net.*

> originals, called in the Sacred Scriptures the Cherubim, which were sculptured and painted on walls of Temples, Towers, Cities, Palaces, and erected in the highly cultivated states of Egypt, Moab, Edom, Aram, among the Rivers of Paradise, being originals from which the Greeks and Hetrurians copied Hercules Farnese, Venus of Medicis, Apollo Belvidere, and all the grand works of ancient art."

His patron, Butts, appears to have been an admirable person. He never lacked friends, and if with some of them—Hayley, for instance—there were subsequent troubles, he owed much to human benevolence. Of his circumstances, Gilchrist writes that "There was an air of poverty as of an artisan's room; but everything was clean and neat; nothing sordid. Blake himself, with his serene, cheerful, dignified presence and manner, made all seem natural and of course. Conversing with him, you saw or felt nothing of his poverty, though he took no pains to conceal it; if he had, you would have been effectually reminded of it. What in description sounds mean and miserable wore, to Blake's intimates, a delightful aspect". A friend said of him: "I never look upon him as an unfortunate man of genius. He knew every great man of his day, and had enough."

There is a tendency in Dr. Blackstone, as in other writers about Blake, to present him as a kind of Leftist or revolutionary. It is true that, like many others, he hailed the French Revolution ("France standing on the top of golden hours And human nature seeming born again") as opening up a new and better world for all mankind, and that he consorted with characters like Tom Paine and Godwin, the latter of whom, not surprisingly, he found personally very antipathetic. It is also true that in ebullient moments he would make pronouncements like:

> "The Kingdoms of this World are now become the Kingdoms of God & His Christ, & we shall reign with him for ever and ever. The Reign of Literature & the Arts commences. Blessed are those who are found studious of Literature & Humane & polite accomplishments. Such have their lamps burning & such shall shine as the stars."

At the same time, there is throughout his work a recognition that this world and this life are only images of some other reality, and that to expect in terms of them any permanent satisfaction or state of felicity would be quite ludicrous. "Nature", he wrote, "has no Outline, but Imagination has. Nature has no Tune, but Imagination has. Nature has no Supernatural and dissolves: Imagination is Eternity". It was on this eternity of the imagination that all his hopes were fixed rather than on any earthly paradise. Cruelty and injustice aroused his indignation, but, like the sunflower, he, too, was often weary of time. His rage and his insight, his hate and his love, his understanding and his dreams, existed separately, producing a kind of schizophrenia. He was often thought to be, and perhaps was, in a sense mad. Like Swedenborg, in whose cult he was brought up, he conducted conversations with figures of antiquity—Socrates and Virgil, but also heard angels singing in trees, and saw the mystery of life in a rose:

> O rose, thou art sick!
> The invisible worm
> That flies in the night,
> In the howling storm,

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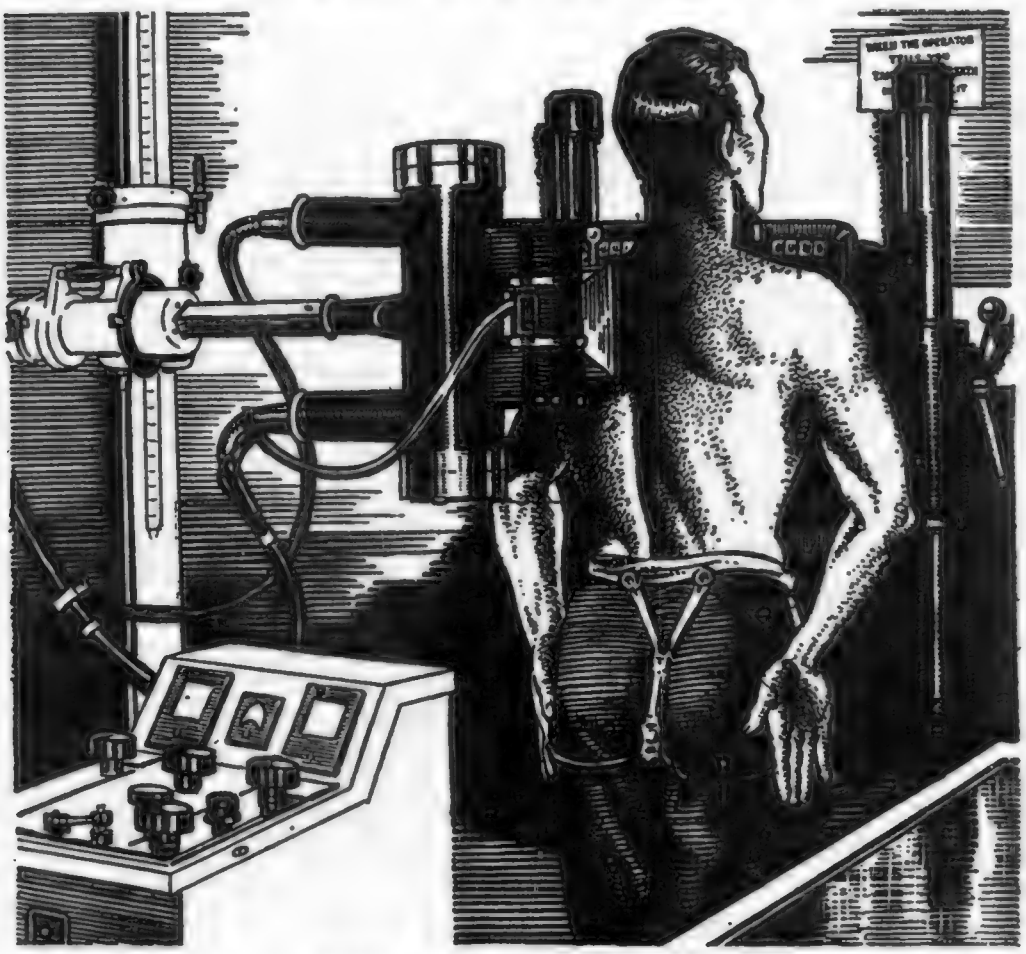

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There is, perhaps, a kind of divine aptness—or, as Blake puts it, "fearful symmetry"—in the fact that this passionate sense he had of the validity of the imagination, and the imagination alone, should have involved him in making occasional remarks which have been taken as upholding causes which he would assuredly have found highly repugnant. It is difficult to imagine anything that, from his point of view, would have been more distasteful, for instance, than to hear a Socialist Sunday School chanting his lines, "And did those feet in ancient time" His bow of burnished gold, his arrows of desire, whatever else they were intended for, were assuredly not for the purpose of instituting a Beveridge plan. Nor, it may safely be assumed, when he wrote of being "above Time's troubled Fountains On the Great Atlantic Mountains" did he envisage Mr. Churchill's subsequent use of the phrase as describing a suitable place for him, along with Marshal Stalin and President Roosevelt, to arrange the world's affairs. Dr. Blackstone goes so far as to derive even from the bizarre incident which involved Blake in being charged with treason an assurance that he was against the Government, and remarks with singular naïveté of one of Blake's last outbursts—his satirical notes on Dr. Thornton's new translation of the Lord's Prayer—that "his (Blake's) version of the Lord's Prayer, which he gives as a counterblast to Dr. Thornton's 'Tory' version, is frankly Communistic".

Again, Dr. Blackstone suggests that Blake, as a believer in "free love", found his marriage to his wife, Catherine, often oppressive and miserable. This is highly improbable. It is true that a suggestion occurs at one point, of which much has been made, that Blake had the idea of bringing a concubine into his household, and that the theme of jealousy was one which at times clearly obsessed him. However, everything suggests that Catherine was an excellent and devoted wife who put up with his vagaries and eccentricities without ever complaining, ran his household efficiently, and fell in amiably with his strange humours—whether he was conversing with Milton, or requiring her co-operation, in the nude, to enact Adam and Eve in a little summer house at the end of their garden. It may be doubted whether Catherine took Blake's reference to "Sexual strife" as seriously as Dr. Blackstone. In any case, they remained together constantly till his death. On his death bed he broke off from everything else he had been trying to do, and drew a head of Catherine because "you have ever been an angel to me". His death was happy and unfearful. Earlier he had written of death, "I cannot think of death as more than going out of one room into another," and when his own time came, according to his friend, George Richmond, he died "in a most glorious manner. He said He was going to that Country he had all His life wished to see and expressed himself Happy hoping for Salvation through Jesus Christ—Just before he died his Countenance became fair—His eyes Brighten'd and He burst out in Singing of the things he Saw in Heaven".

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Short Notices

STRINDBERG

THE STRANGE LIFE OF AUGUST STRINDBERG. By Elizabeth Sprigge. *Hamish Hamilton.* 15*s.*

MISS SPRIGGE'S biography is readable and authoritative; unlike most biographies, it is too short. Apart from a three-page postscript she omits any criticism of Strindberg's work. As so much of this was autobiographical her account of his life helps the understanding of what he wrote; but she is so obviously competent to criticize learnedly and intelligently that one can only hope she is keeping her discussion of the plays and novels for a second volume. After all, it is generally assumed that the biography of a man of action should be concerned mainly with events, and similarly the biography of an artist should concentrate on creations. Otherwise it may become merely a list of eccentricities.

Strindberg was a horrible man and the most charitable judgment on his career is "Guilty but Insane". The romantic picture of Genius does not seem so attractive to-day. Bad temper, persecution mania, treachery, boasting, fecklessness have lost their charm, probably because we no longer read about them in sheltered calm where they variegate the tedium of ordinary life. Hitler has shown what a stock genius can do when taken at his own valuation. Grudgingly we admit that some departure from dull, decent morals may be necessary to produce "Great Art"; but we are increasingly doubtful whether this is psychologically true, and we insist that the value of the product should heavily outweigh the evils of the process.

Strindberg was the son of an aristocrat and his plebeian wife, formerly his mistress. She was devoted to his elder brother and he could only occasionally gain from her the response he craved. This added domestic to social insecurity. The family was bankrupt and he had to go to a cheap school and even there be noticeable for the cheapness of his clothes. The boy was clever but unteachable, always wanting to excel but hating the drudgery of systematic study. He spent his life looking for short cuts. He was a great beginner of things. At the University he began with æsthetics, switched over to medicine and completed nothing. As a

journalist he was always being given chances and throwing them away after a promising start. He violently attacked the tolerant Sweden of his time and was given a post in the Royal Library, where he learned Chinese and was able to gain some reputation as an Orientalist; but soon he was on his beam ends again, railing at the Fate which pursued him. His three marriages were attempts to produce a more satisfactory Mother-Son relationship than he had known as a child; all failed. In the home he was moody and exacting, beginning by talking of woman's right to a career but soon behaving like any petty tyrant. He could be attractive enough when he wanted anything; helpful, helpless and gay. It was success that made him jealous and afraid. He would sponge on a friend and then accuse him of plotting his death. As he became obsessed with fake religions and black magic the plots he invented became more outrageous. Somehow he escaped certification, at what cost to his wives and children it is appalling to think.

It is extraordinary that his megalomaniac railings against women were taken as serious contributions to thought. His rebellions were always so automatic. Sweden was his country, so he lashed it frenziedly. The emancipation of women was in the air, so he attacked women. Science had reached the point where the selfless work of generations of trained workers had built up a body of certain knowledge, so he "exposed" science, pottering at home, self-taught, and arrogantly "proving" that sulphur and nitrogen were compounds, because the professionals said they were elements. It is quite true that other artists have been silly, Shelley for example. But there was something generous and warm-hearted about Shelley's political and social enthusiasms. They lit flames in good men and inspired good deeds. Strindberg, like Wagner, appealed to the beast in man, except when he managed to resolve the chaos and cruelty of his life in the power and perfection of his work.

Miss Sprigge suggests that as a writer Strindberg should be grouped with the moderns, with O'Neill, Cocteau and Dali. He was an experimenter who always managed to create new forms for new purposes. Stretching from Realism to the dream world of something very like Surrealism, his range was enormous. He was a born writer; but he was a horrible man.

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WORK SUSPENDED. Evelyn Waugh. *Chapman and Hall*. 7*s*. 6*d*.

WISTERIA COTTAGE. Robert Coates. *Gollancz*. 8*s*. 6*d*.

THE LAST OF THE CONQUERORS. William Gardner Smith. *Gollancz*. 10*s*. 6*d*.

HIGH up on the list of those whose writing is always a pleasure to read is Miss Elizabeth Bowen. Her new book is the story of a woman who learns that her lover is a traitor to his country. The time is 1942. Those who read the stories in *The Demon Lover* will remember how vividly Miss Bowen caught the atmosphere of London in wartime, the foreboding moonlit nights, the crumbling houses, the crumbling forms and manners. All this is recaptured again in *The Heat of the Day*, we feel it with that mingling of relief and nostalgia for a vanished intensity of living with which we remember dangers and sorrows past. Miss Bowen excels in the portraits of ladies and of houses; her heroines are always ladies, their combination of fastidiousness and passion is perfectly set down. Stella Rodney is a typical portrait, so is the deranged cousin Nettie in her tactfully disguised mental home. The conversations between Stella's son Roderick, who is very like his mother, and cousin Nettie, between Stella and the servants at Mount Morris, the verbal thrusts between Stella and Harrison, show manners persisting through insanity and stress; contrasting with the cosy talks between Connie and Louie, the two working-class girls, where reticences are simply due to a lack of the means of expression. Connie and Louie are recorded brilliantly, but they are not felt, they have thus that slight overemphasis which comes from setting persons deliberately on a stage.

Only a novelist of Miss Bowen's art could succeed with the failure of her central situation. Although she handles this situation with superb technique, making us

wonder what is going to happen, we are never convinced that it would have happened. We are shown Robert's family and background, in a scene of admirably malicious wit, but we are never told why Robert betrays his country and we do not believe that he would. The doubt is not insistent while we are reading, the story is told too well for that, but when the suspense is slackened it is Stella and Roderick, cousin Francis and Mount Morris that we remember, the central situation has taken second place.

THE amateur of existentialism may now add to his library a translation of Sartre's *La Nausée* appearing under the title of *The Journal of Antoine Roquentin*. This novel, first published in 1938, is the author's first exploration of his now famous philosophy. Antoine Roquentin is a little man with red hair who, having somehow made a muddle of his love affair, retires to a small provincial town to immerse himself in the biography of a minor historical figure. Antoine is subject to recurrent fits of physical and spiritual nausea which reduce life to the terms of a painting by Hieronymous Bosch or Salvator Dali. Some of the more repulsive scenes in this book remain unwillingly in the mind like an obscene nightmare, smearing the wit and polish of his descriptions of the stuffy little town with its preposterous gallery of local worthies, and destroying the sympathy occasionally aroused for the wretched little Antoine. Unless the powers of this writer can be harnessed to integrate and not to disintegrate, I feel that, like Céline, he will merely disintegrate his own reputation.

THE stories of Angus Wilson, whose first collection, *The Wrong Set*, is just published are so unusually good that they merit longer notice. The writing is highly polished, the attack on attitudes, personal and social, is devastating and they have, moreover, a sense of form rare among the younger English story-tellers who have been afflicted with shaplessness ever since the suburbs discovered Tchehov. He has the additional gift, rare among young satirists, of not withholding sympathy from his victims, and if he can transfer his quality to a larger canvas we should have a new British novelist of quality.

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EVELYN WAUGH'S *Work Suspended* is the fragment of a novel put aside in 1939. There are some very good "bits"; John Plant's father, a painter of problem pictures continuing into the 'thirties, is admirable and there are nice comic passages between Plant and the motorist who killed his father, and between Plant and the daft girl Julia, but whether the whole was conceived as a comedy of manners or a study of the heart we shall now never know. Beside the neat, bright, artificial stories which make up the rest of the volume, the fragment seems as though it might sound depths but the growing tendency of novelists to publish their Edwin Droods during their lifetimes should, I think, be discouraged.

INCLUDED with *Work Suspended* is *Mr. Loveday's Little Outing*, the story of a nice quiet psychopath who being let out after twenty years in a criminal lunatic asylum immediately duplicates the murder for which he was imprisoned. This story seems somehow relevent to *Wisteria Cottage*, a detailed and spine-chilling account of the growth of the idea of murder in the mind of an unbalanced young man. The book propels the reader remorselessly to the expected horror at the end; technically it is a triumph, but it fails completely in what I suspect it sought to do, that is to arouse sympathy, and fellow feeling for the murderer.

WILLIAM GARDNER SMITH, we are told, is a young American negro, who was only twenty when he wrote *The Last of the Conquerors*. The book is remarkably assured in its handling and quite shockingly naïve in its assumption, that the sexual attraction of German women to American negroes has anything to do with enlightened social ideas. Perhaps I do the writer an injustice in so coarsely summarizing his theme, but the idyllic picture of that dear old German culture (now apparently due for its second resurrection), is opposed to the crudities of the American attitude to miscegenation with a simplicity which is both touching and irritating to theEuropean.

RUBY MILLAR.

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When Mr. J. S. Lewis entered the business at the age of nineteen, he was quick to notice its defects. A long period of struggle with his father followed. For the general reader, this early autobiography is the most attractive part of Mr. J. S. Lewis's book. Here in the commercial field is repeated the pattern of revolt within the family which has been so admirably described on the intellectual plane in books such as Sir Edmund Gosse's *Father and Son.*

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at the zeal with which Mr. J. S. Lewis denounces private profit. For profit, after all, is by definition the perquisite of the people who have put up the money, and so-called "profit-sharing" is really only an elaborate method of paying bonuses to the workers. But disputable though Mr. J. S. Lewis's philosophy may be, the story of how his own experiment has been built up is a welcome addition to the library of business history.

ALAN HODGE.

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The author describes his book as "The Life Story of an Artist" but it is, in fact, the record of conversations at the artist's home in Sussex and contains just enough reminiscences to form a background to a portrait sketch rather than a biography. Brangwyn emerges from these pages as a man of wide interests, warm sympathies and hearty prejudices. The conversational style is breezy and at times delightfully Rabelaisian. His recorded views range from Art to Sex and he is invariably worth listening to. Anyone acquainted with his work will not be surprised that this is so.

The author deserves credit for his handling of the difficult dialogue form, and for his provocative questioning of his "sitter". I could, however, wish that he were less prone to relieve the dialogue by references to Sir Frank's lighting or extinguishing of cigarettes. This literary device tends to become tedious.

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There are many reproductions of vigorous drawings by Brangwyn and two of fine portrait drawings by Augustus John; one of Sir Frank himself, the other of the author. And, to give the fullest measure, there is a reproduction of a gently ironic caricature by Sir Max Beerbohm.

SYDNEY J. MAIDEN.

A. C. ("Admirable Crichton") DOYLE

THE LIFE OF SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE: by John Dickson Carr. *John Murray.* 18*s.*

IN the introduction to his life of Arthur Conan Doyle, Mr. John Dickson Carr says: "My greatest thanks are due to Mr. Adrian Conan Doyle, who for two years assisted me in my task which I could not have accomplished without his help." Mr. Carr's gratitude will not be echoed by anyone who prefers a credible biography to a panegyric which would stagger even a court poet to an Oriental tyrant. The chief interest of this book is that it makes entirely clear why Mr. Adrian Doyle has expressed such keen dissatisfaction with Hesketh Pearson's genial and, within reasonable limits, appreciative biography of his father. To Hesketh Pearson, Conan Doyle was, intellectually and emotionally, "the man in the street" (Doyle's own description of himself), but, unlike most men in the street, articulate, and so destined to be the medium through which the ordinary Englishman at the close of the nineteenth century expressed the longing for action and excitement which had been swelling through decades of security and peace. While doing full justice to Doyle's sterling rather than picturesque qualities, Hesketh Pearson did not identify him with the fabulous heroes of his fancy, Sherlock Holmes and Sir Nigel Loring; nor did he credit him with a genius for religion because he developed a passionate interest in spiritualism. Hence, Mr. Adrian Doyle's dissatisfaction with Hesketh Pearson. That his satisfaction with Mr. Carr is unqualified, no reader will doubt; though it is always possible that there are some trifling omissions in Mr. Carr's catalogue of Doyle's achievements, and that the world has yet to learn that Conan Doyle, the trail-blazer, was the first person to introduce tight-rope dancing into Alaska, and Conan Doyle, the humanitarian, the first person to wean the textile workers of Lancashire from the immoderate use of snuff.

HUGH KINGSMILL.

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FAMILY LIFE

A NINETEENTH-CENTURY CHILDHOOD. By Mary MacCarthy. Introduction by John Betjeman. *Hamish Hamilton.* 6*s.*

WOMEN writers excel in delicate realism, the perception of social nuances, personal idiosyncrasies, and the creation of atmosphere. The result may be cloying, miasmic, irritating or charming. Mary MacCarthy's book, first published in 1924, and now reissued, is charming and something more.

Nostalgia for childhood is common among contemporary intellectuals longing for "the innocent eye"; this book is not of that kind. It is a brief, lucid, gently perceptive account of family life in the last years of Victoria's reign—the large, cultured, joyful family of the Vice-Provost of Eton. The

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result is an astonishingly full re-creation of a now vanished atmosphere.

Mrs. MacCarthy deliberately skates on the surface of her theme; if she did more the book's gentle, lyrical quality would be lost. Because the essentials are there, and implications innumerable, a more profound effect is made than was perhaps intended. This precise, evocative brevity can be recommended to more voluminous autobiographers, who could learn much from Mrs. MacCarthy's words on family records: "I myself would like to linger among these old skeletons but I will not; for records are very interesting to a descendant, but hardly a matter of curiosity to the general reader." Again and again a single phrase describes vividly and with gentle wit something a writer with less humility and self-discipline would hardly convey in a chapter. Occasional archness is the only blemish within the book's limited compass. The affectionate, humorous quality of the writing can be shown by random quotation. Of family portraits: They "seemed perpetually interested in us, even when we were eating rice pudding". A *quiet* originality is rare and precious.

J. B. PICK.

A DUCHESS OF THE ASCENDANCY

EMILY, DUCHESS OF LEINSTER, 1731-1814. By Brian FitzGerald. *Staples Press.* 15*s.*

BOOKS written by people about their ancestors are rarely a success, but this is a notable exception. Mr. FitzGerald writes not only with enthusiasm, but also with discrimination, and the result is an extremely readable account of Anglo-Irish society in the heyday of the "Ascendancy". The author sunk himself in his period, and as he is by temperament a Whig of the school of Charles James Fox the opinions of his characters appeal to him, so that at times this seems almost to be the work of a contemporary, than which there could be no higher praise.

Emily, Duchess of Leinster, was remarkable for her longevity and her fertility, but not for much else. Mr. FitzGerald fully realizes this, and he wisely uses the duchess as a peg upon which to hang an account of the lives and thoughts of her more interesting friends and relatives. She could, however, write a good letter, though no Madame de Sevigné, and the extracts from her correspondence are skilfully chosen to illustrate the life of the period in which she lived. For this reason alone the book is well worth reading.

Irish history has been described as a series of new beginnings, each claiming historical continuity, and each pretending that its predecessor never really happened. The era which covered the life of the subject of the biography was just such an age, and in these pages it appears in all its strength and weakness.

CHARLES PETRIE.

We regret that the first line in Mr. Summers's Poem "Love of the Past" which appeared in the March Number, should have read "This time is alive"... *and not* "The time is alive"... *as printed.*

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